



Transport & Distribution Training Package

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INTRODUCTION

In 1996 the Ministers of Vocational Education and Training endorsed the major features of a National Training Framework, designed to make the regulation of Australia's national training arrangements simpler and more flexible.

The major features of the National Training Framework are:

- Revised and simplified arrangements for the recognition of training organisations and training products assuring quality of training provision
- Training Packages which integrate nationally available training products including new assessment arrangements with competency standards

Training Packages within the Transport and Distribution Industry will have a number of applications. Although primarily used as a resource to develop training programs within the industry, they will also provide a benchmark for the assessment of an employee's competence, and may be used in the evaluation of enterprise quality processes and as a tool for organisational management.

Training Packages integrate nationally recognised and endorsed competency standards, assessment guidelines and qualifications. These are endorsed by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) through the National Training Framework Committee (NTFC) and hence are known as the endorsed components of the Training Packages. The relationships between the three components may be expressed as:

- Competency Standards specify the level of performance of an employee in the workplace
- Assessment Guidelines provide a framework in which an accurate, reliable and valid assessment of the applicable competency standards may take place
- National Qualifications are awarded when an employee has been assessed as achieving a combination of competency standards at an appropriate level. Where an employee has achieved less than the combination of competency standards for a qualification to be issued, that individual is given a Statement of Attainment which similarly recognises their achievement.

The endorsed components of the training package are complemented by the development of optional learning strategies, assessment tools and professional development materials which form the non-endorsed components of the training package and hence do not have to be submitted for endorsement but are noted by the NTFC.

This booklet provides one aspect of the endorsed component of the Training Package - the Assessment Guidelines.

WHAT ARE ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES?

Assessment Guidelines describe the type of system by which the competency of an employee/learner may be assessed against endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards. They detail information concerning assessment processes and address issues such as:

- How and when assessments may be conducted
- Who may conduct assessments
- What constitutes a valid assessment
- The types of recording and credential issuing mechanisms

The process of assessment is a central element of the development of a Competency Based Training (CBT) system. It ensures that persons working or seeking work within the Transport and Distribution industry have the skills and knowledge required to perform selected job functions. Similarly it provides a benchmark that ensures an employee's/learners skills are recognised and acknowledged.

Assessment Guidelines provide direction for the implementation of an industry relevant assessment system that is designed to ensure the validity, reliability and fairness of assessments conducted in the workplace and in institutional contexts.

Training Package Assessment Guidelines are based on principles agreed by Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers of Education and Training. The Guidelines are designed to ensure validity, reliability and fairness of assessments conducted in workplaces and institutional contexts.

The following extract from 'Guidelines for Training Package Developers' (ANTA - 1997,B11) outlines the required format of guidelines for Assessment Guidelines to gain endorsement from the NTFC.

The Assessment Guidelines component of the Training Package comprises five sections.

1. *Assessment System Overview - a description of the assessment system which operates in the specific industry or industry sector*
2. *Assessor Qualifications and Training - an outline of the qualifications required for assessors, the way in which these requirements can be met and the training that is available for assessors*
3. *Guidelines for Designing Assessment Materials - a description of the processes involved in designing assessment materials which enable assessors to gather sufficient, valid and reliable information for making assessment decisions*
4. *Guidelines for Conducting Assessments - an overview of the industry endorsed processes for conducting assessments*
5. *Sources of Information on Assessment - details of sources of information on the industry assessment system*

SECTION 1

OVERVIEW

TDT Australia has coverage for the Transport and Distribution industry which comprises the Road Transport, Warehousing, Stevedoring, Maritime, Rail and Bus Transport, and Air Transport sectors.

All sectors encompassed by TDT Australia have undergone and continue to undergo significant workplace restructuring and change. The implementation of new technology, changes to the organisation of work, increased efficiency and globalisation have substantially impacted upon the competencies required of employees.

To meet the challenge of industries continued restructuring, the training system should continue to adapt, change, and provide opportunities whereby workers skills and knowledge will remain adaptable to different contexts and environments.

The focus of TDT Australia is to promote and support, through the Assessment Guidelines, the need for assessment to be more attuned to workplace situations. The changes mean that greater attention will be given to direct assessment practices in the workplace environment where the need to infer competence rather than observe it is reduced. In this way, the assessment of an employee's competence is based on realistic workplace outcomes (as detailed in the competency standards) rather than the implementation of training generally isolated from a workplace context.

The benchmark for assessment, in accordance with national requirements, will be the endorsed industry competency standards for Transport and Distribution.

Road Transport	AQF Levels 1-4
Warehousing	AQF Levels 1-4
Stevedoring	AQF Levels 1-4

ROLE OF REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

The Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers that oversee the development of vocational training decisions (ANTA Ministerial Council), outline several criteria (appendix 1) to which any industry assessment framework must conform. One of those criteria details the requirement that 'Assessment should be undertaken by, or auspiced through, a registered training provider. That is, any assessment that leads to a qualification under the AQF, must be overseen by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

The industry, under this arrangement, is required to set out processes concerning how and in what circumstances a RTO may operate.

In the Transport and Distribution Industry Assessment System the RTOs are responsible for:

- Conducting assessment processes in accordance with industry assessment guidelines and agreed State/Territory Training Authority/Industry QA arrangements
- Ensuring that the relevant industry/enterprise endorsed competency standards are used as the benchmark for assessment
- Ensuring that individuals/partnership arrangements undertaking assessments meet the assessor criteria as stipulated by the industry
- Providing quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that assessment is fair, reliable, valid and provides for a consistency of outcomes
- Ensuring that assessments are conducted in a cost efficient, flexible and timely manner
- Issuing the relevant AQF qualification or statement of attainment to an individual who has been assessed as competent in the prescribed units of competency
- Monitoring and evaluating the application of adherence of the assessment process to ensure it is adhering to the industry Assessment Guidelines
- Maintaining records of all assessments undertaken
- Instituting a reporting process for assessment outcomes
- Providing access to records in a secure and efficient manner

RANGE OF OPTIONS FOR UNDERTAKING ASSESSMENT

Within the Transport and Distribution Assessment System a range of options are available to enterprises and providers in the undertaking of assessments provided that those arrangements are in accordance with the Assessment Guidelines. It should be noted that the RTO has responsibility for ensuring the integrity of the assessment process and this should be the guiding focus at all times.

The range of options include:

- Partnerships between enterprises and providers whereby aspects such as evidence collection, assessor requirements, validation methods and the like are shared between the organisations
- Enterprises undertaking the assessment process with the RTO monitoring and validating the assessment outcomes
- Enterprises becoming RTOs
- Enterprises engaging RTOs to undertake all assessment requirements
- Combinations of the above

ASSESSMENT PATHWAYS

The assessment pathway outlined advocates that one assessment pathway is to be applied within the assessment model, which will lead to national recognition and a full or part qualification under the AQF.

This is consistent with the Ministerial Council decisions (appendix 1) which outline that 'Assessment processes shall provide for the recognition of current competencies regardless of where these have been acquired' and further, 'Endorsed industry/enterprise standards are the benchmarks for assessment, where they exist'.

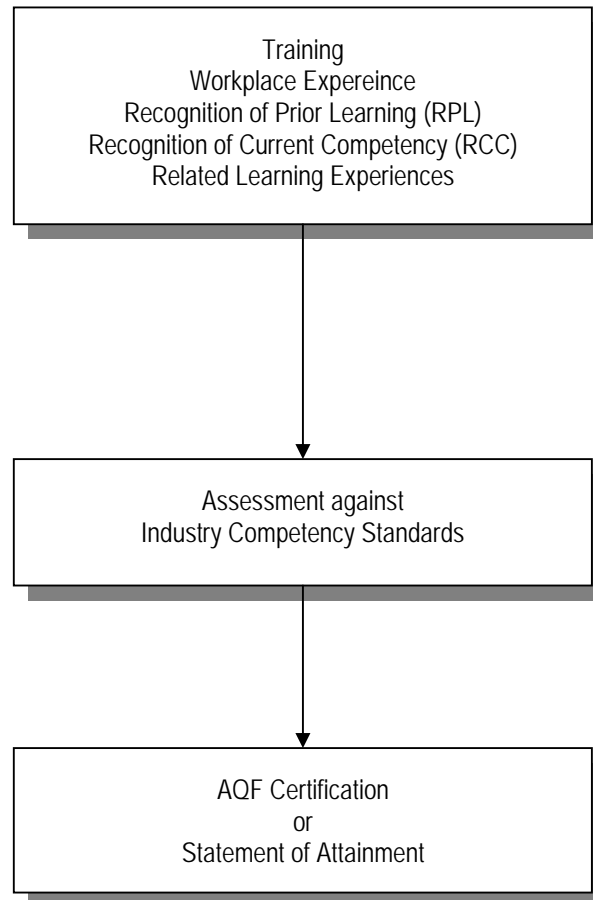
The single assessment pathway acknowledges that competency can be developed through a variety of structured and unstructured experiences, informal and formal training and the transference of knowledge and skill from other contexts and environments. To devise different assessment pathways to encompass the myriad of ways in which competency may be gained is neither efficient nor effective. **The major consideration in any assessment process must be the attainment of the required standard of performance rather than how the competencies may have been acquired.**

The rationale for the single assessment pathway is based on the premise that competency standards provide a benchmark for not only the identification of the required skills and knowledge to be demonstrated but also detail the appropriate context and range of evidence necessary to inform a valid assessment. Therefore, although methodologies and processes for the collection of evidence may differ to account for varying contexts and individual/enterprise requirements, a level of consistency and validity is maintained by ensuring that assessment is always benchmarked against the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise standard.

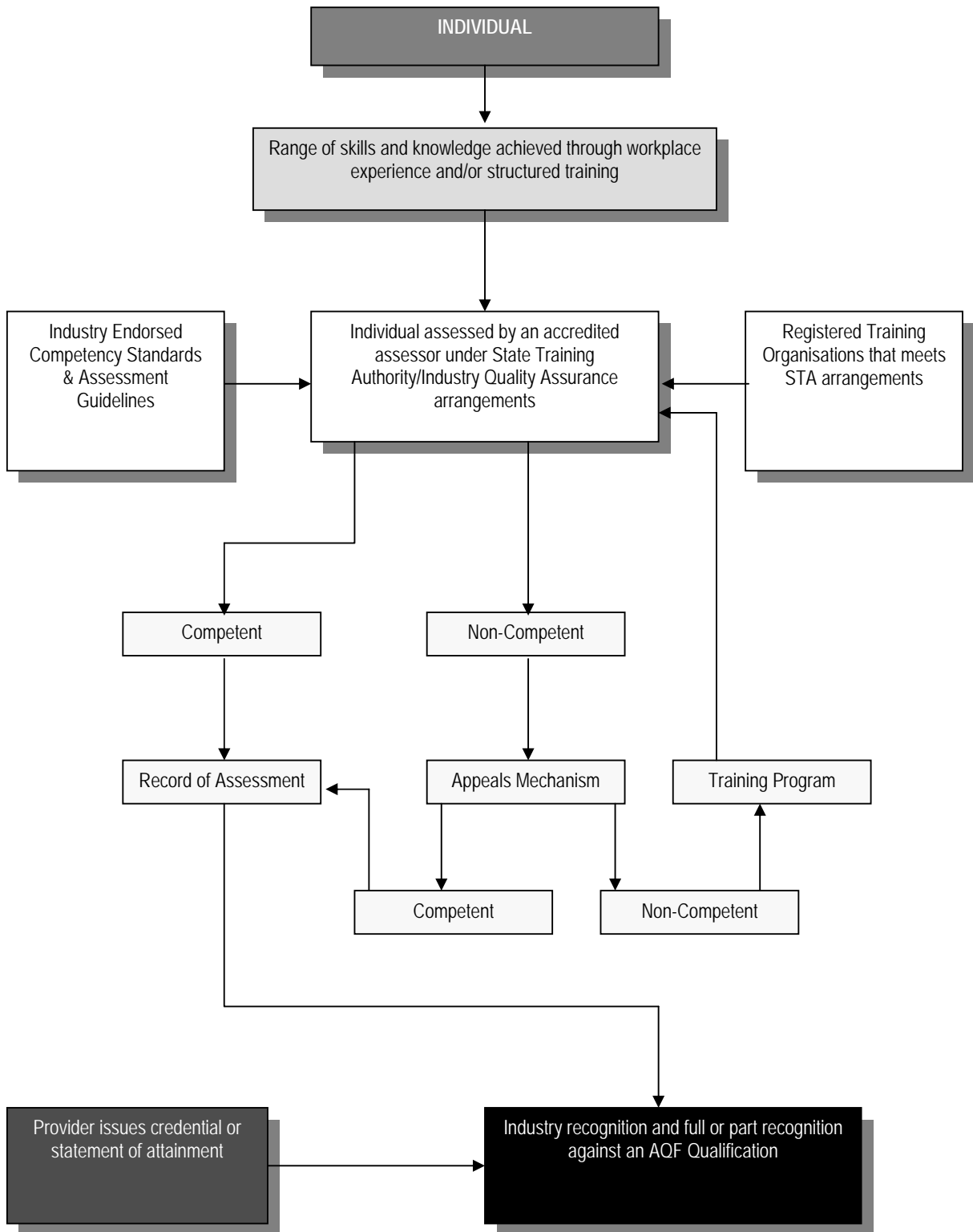
'Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, the purpose of assessment is to confirm that an individual can perform to those standards expected in the workplace as expressed in the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards'.

Guidelines for Training Package Developers. (1997 - B11).

PATHWAYS TO RECOGNITION (CHART)



ASSESSMENT PATHWAYS (CHART)



SECTION 2

ASSESSOR QUALIFICATIONS

Assessments against the competencies in the Training Package will be carried out in accordance with these endorsed guidelines. The guidelines include the necessary qualifications for those conducting assessments and provide for those situations where more than one person may contribute to the assessment and where the required technical and assessment competencies may not all be held by any one person.

Assessors within the Transport and Distribution industry are the principal driver in delivering a responsive, efficient and high quality assessment system. Within the assessment framework they have primary responsibility for:

- determining the application of the assessment process,
- utilising appropriate assessment strategies and instruments,
- conducting the assessment process,
- making accurate and informed judgements, and
- informing and recording all relevant parties of the outcomes of the assessment process.

It is therefore fundamental that assessors must be competent and knowledgeable in the process of assessment.

All assessors, must be competent against two units within the *Competency Standards for Assessment 1995* (Ministerial Council decision – appendix 1). Those standards include: the Assessment Standard – Conduct Assessment in Accordance with an Established Procedure, and the Extension Unit – Plan and Review Assessment.

With the addition of the Specialist Unit – Develop Assessment Tools, Transport and Distribution assessors will have the competence to develop or customise assessment tools that are reflective of individual workplace practice. This enables an assessment process to be tailored to meet the specific requirements of an individual/enterprise rather than using standardised assessment tools which may have limited applicability.

The inclusion of this unit not only delivers a more knowledgeable and competent assessor but also lessens the reliance on a central assessment bank which requires significant investment to both produce and maintain.

To be recognised as an assessor in the Transport and Distribution Industry the assessor must:

- be competent against the following units of competency from the *Competency Standards for Assessment* the Assessment Standards – *Conduct Assessment in Accordance with an Established Procedure* the Extension Unit – *Plan and Review Assessment*, and the Specialist Unit – *Develop Assessment Tools*.
- have knowledge of the nature and impact of training reform within the Transport and Distribution industry including an overview of the process of assessment adopted by the industry.
- be technically competent at least to the level being assessed either individually or in a partnership arrangement. (See section 2.2).

Assessor competence may be achieved through the completion of a recognised training program or an approved recognition of prior learning process. Regardless of the method used to infer competence, assessment must always be demonstrated against the endorsed industry assessor standards.

USING QUALIFIED ASSESSORS

In undertaking the assessment process consideration must be given to those methods that, whilst maintaining the integrity and quality of the system, offer an approach that is innovative and flexible.

There are a variety of means by which an assessment may be undertaken, these include:

- the structure of the process, including the combinations of persons that may conduct the assessment
- the gathering of evidence, which may include data collection procedures such as previous history, challenge tests, demonstrations, workplace records etc., and
- the various recognition arrangements negotiated between the provider and the enterprise.

These processes can potentially offer significant cost and time efficiencies to both enterprises and individuals.

Significant flexibility may be obtained by using combinations of persons for assessment. This may include utilising operational experts, enterprise endorsed assessors, external assessors, workplace supervisors, assessment panels and the like in various ways provided that their combined competence is equal to the benchmark requirements for a qualified Transport and Distribution assessor as outlined in section 2.1

Whilst some enterprises and Registered Training Organisations will opt for a single qualified assessor to undertake the assessment process, others will utilise a flexible approach when undertaking workplace or institutional assessments. The flexible approach being most appropriate where assessors may not be technically competent at the level or unit being assessed or where it is cost prohibitive to have an assessor undertake all aspects of the assessment process (e.g. remote location, length of assessment etc.).

The assessor, in determining the level of competence or otherwise of a candidate, must be satisfied that the evidence collected adequately addresses the applicable industry/enterprise competency standards and that the assessment process has been undertaken in a valid, reliable and fair manner.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONDUCTING ASSESSMENTS

The following requirements must be adhered to when conducting assessments:

- assessors (or partnership arrangements) must have a technical level of competence at least to the level to which the assessment is being undertaken.
- partnership arrangements between Registered Training Organisations and enterprises are conducted in accordance with assessment quality processes and reflect the needs of individuals and enterprises.
- assessment process must be undertaken, either in part or in full, by a qualified assessor. Where a combination of persons is deemed the most appropriate method for assessing competence, all quality assurance and assessor requirements must be met.
- the outcome of any assessment process must be endorsed and forwarded for recognition by a qualified assessor.
- Registered Training Organisations must verify and document the competence of individual assessors in accordance with industry requirements.

SECTION 3

THE PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT

The process of assessment within the Transport and Distribution assessment system requires assessors to make informed judgements concerning an individual's performance against national industry or enterprise-based competency standards. To fulfil this requirement there is a constant need for assessors to interpret and translate information contained within the competency standards to meet the varying contexts in which assessment will take place. The development of reliable, valid, flexible and fair assessment instruments are critical in meeting this challenge.

The design of assessment instruments must therefore consider aspects such as the:

- assessment context
- assessment environment
- assessment purpose
- level of available resources
- characteristics of the assessee
- rigour and length of the assessment
- level of evidence required

At all times assessors must ensure that sufficient evidence is gathered to provide an accurate, valid and fair assessment of an individual's performance against the applicable competency standard(s).

EVIDENCE GATHERING

An effective assessment process relies on the collection of sufficient information to make an informed judgement on the performance of an individual. Whilst there are no absolute rules about how much evidence is required or what evidence gathering methods should be used, there is a need to confirm the accuracy and consistency of any assessment of performance.

Although processes for the gathering of evidence will vary, four primary approaches should be utilised. They include:

- samples of performance (e.g. constructed through simulations, activities and the like);
- observation of performance in the workplace;
- evidence of prior performance (e.g. recognition of prior learning, recognition of current competencies);
- supplementary information (e.g. questioning, tests, presentations, contingency analysis and the like).

In many instances, the most appropriate method of gathering evidence will be a combination of all four approaches although this would be to be considered in relation to factors such as time, cost and context.

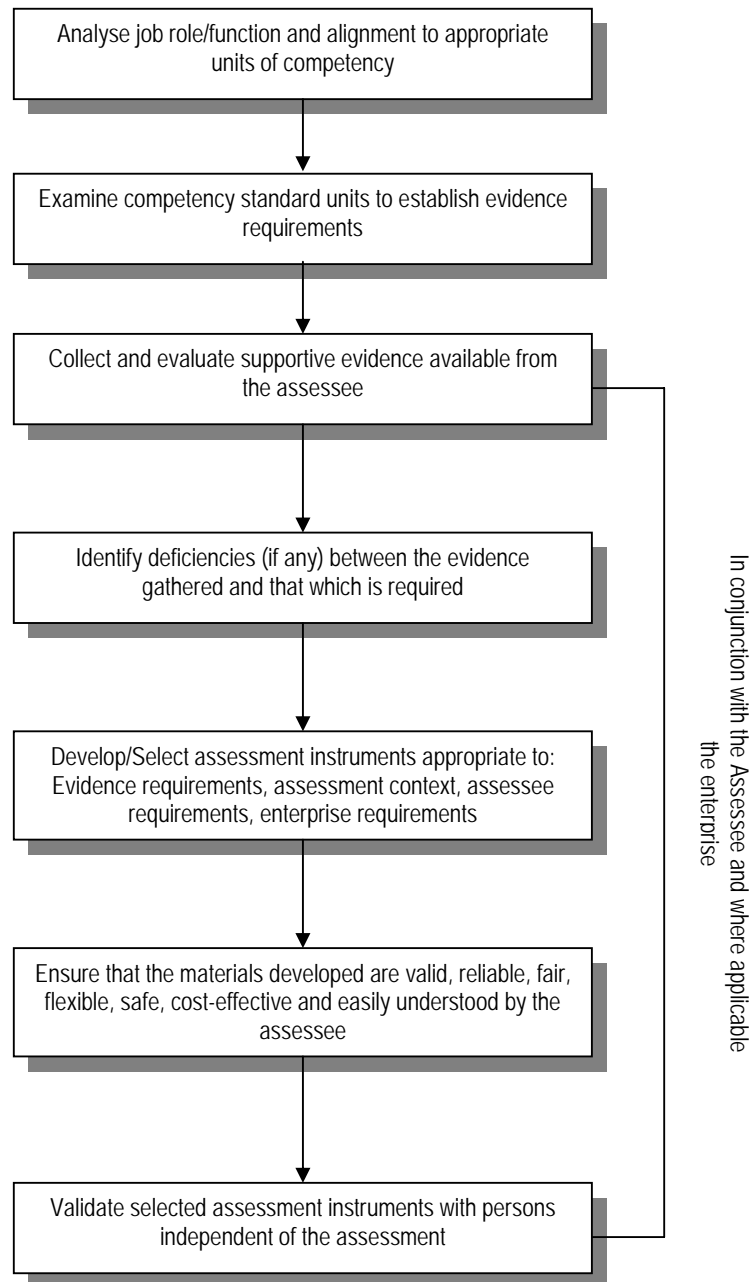
Examples of Appropriate Evidence Gathering Methods or Techniques

1. Samples of performance	a. Evaluation of simulated product b. Evaluation of simulated process c. Examination of finished products and processes d. Skill tests aligned to work activity
2. Observation of performance in the workplace	a. Evaluation of product b. Evaluation of process c. Management of changing context and requirements d. Interaction with related work activities
3. Evidence of prior performance	a. Evaluation of qualifications content b. Evaluation of previous work through portfolios, projects, articles, reports, work history, supervisor and referees' reports etc.

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT DESIGN

In constructing valid and reliable assessment instruments a balance must be maintained between the specific needs of enterprises and individuals and that of ensuring the integrity of the industry/enterprise competency standards. It is the responsibility of the assessor to ensure that any instruments utilised will produce an outcome that can be directly aligned to the achievement of an industry/enterprise competency standard(s).

The following flowchart outlines a process of designing assessment instruments that meet that criteria.



SECTION 4

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING ASSESSMENTS

The following guidelines are based on three major stages of the assessment process:

1. Prepare for assessment
2. Conduct the assessment
3. Manage and review the assessment process

The guidelines are applicable to any assessment context using industry or enterprise competency standards.

It is viewed that the assessor and assessee are active participants in the assessment process. Where the assessment is undertaken in a workplace, the opportunity to participate in the assessment process should be afforded to the employer and other relevant persons.

PREPARE FOR ASSESSMENT

1. Identify and explain the context of assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Discuss the context and purpose of assessment with the person(s) being assessed and confirm that it is understoodb. Obtain and explain to the person(s) being assessed the relevant performance measures applying to assessment (e.g. current endorsed competency standards, learning outcomes of the training program)c. Explain and obtain agreement for the assessment procedured. Identify and explain any legal and ethical responsibilities associated with assessment to the person(s) being assessede. Check whether the person(s) being assessed requires to those with special needs
2. Plan evidence gathering opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Identify opportunities to gather evidence of competency which occur as part of the workplace or training activitiesb. Identify the need to gather additional evidence which may not occur as part of workplace or training activitiesc. Plan and schedule all evidence gathering activity in accordance with the assessment procedured. Ensure that the planned approach to gathering evidence will provide sufficient, reliable, valid and fair evidence of competencye. Ensure that the planned approach to gathering evidence will cover the four dimensions of competence<ol style="list-style-type: none">e.1. Task skillse.2. Task management skillse.3. Contingency management skillse.4. Job/role environment skills
3. Organise assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Obtain and arrange the resources specified in the assessment procedureb. Inform the relevant people of assessment plansc. Check that the assessment environment permits fair, valid and reliable assessmentd. Check that the assessment environment is safe and accessiblee. Explain the assessment arrangements and requirements simple and clearly to the person(s) being assessedf. Obtain agreement regarding assessment arrangements with person(s) being assessed

CONDUCT THE ASSESSMENT

1. Gather evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Put the person(s) being assessed at ease b. Gather all the evidence specified in the assessment procedure, using assessment methods and tools specified c. Gather evidence for those with special needs, in accordance with specified allowable adjustments to the assessment method(s) d. Document the evidence gathered in accordance with the assessment procedure
2. Make the assessment decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Evaluate the evidence gathered in terms of its: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.1. Validity a.2. Authenticity a.3. Sufficiency a.4. Currency a.5. consistent achievement of the specified standard b. Make the assessment decision in accordance with the criteria specified in the assessment procedure c. Seek guidance, if in doubt, from a more experienced assessor(s) nominated in the assessment procedures

MANAGE THE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

1. Record assessment results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Record assessment results promptly and in accordance with the specified assessment procedure b. Record assessment results accurately in accordance with the specified record keeping requirements c. Provide access to the assessment records only to authorised personnel d. Maintain confidentiality of assessment outcome
2. Provide feedback to person(s) being assessed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discuss and confirm performance with the person(s) being assessed b. Give clear and constructive feedback to the person(s) being assessed c. Explore with the person(s) being assessed ways of overcoming any gaps in their competency revealed by assessment d. Give guidance on further goals/training opportunities, if appropriate e. Advise and confirm with person(s) being assessed reassessment opportunities and/or review appeal mechanisms available where the assessment decision is challenged
3. Report on the conduct of the assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Report on the positive and negative features experienced in conducting assessment responsible for the assessment procedure b. Record and report promptly any assessment decision disputed by the person(s) being assessed to those nominated in the assessment procedure c. Make suggestions for improving any aspect of the assessment process to those responsible for the assessment procedure

SECTION 5

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ASSESSMENT

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APPENDIX 1

ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES ADOPTED BY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING MINISTERS

1. Endorsed industry/enterprise standards form the basis of qualifications in the vocational education and training sector, where they exist.
2. Endorsed industry/enterprise standards are the benchmarks for assessment, where they exist.
3. Assessment conducted for the purpose of national recognition should lead to a part or full qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
4. Assessment should be undertaken by, or auspiced through, a registered provider.
5. Assessment for national recognition purposes shall be conducted within a quality assurance framework.
6. Responsibility for assessment resides with the body that issues the qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework.
7. Assessment processes shall be valid, flexible and fair.
8. Assessment systems must incorporate mechanisms for recording, storing and accessing outcomes.
9. Assessment reporting systems should indicate the units of competency that the individual has attained.
10. Assessment systems should incorporate ongoing monitoring and review processes.
11. Assessment processes shall provide for the recognition of current competencies regardless of where those have been acquired.