TAEASS401

Plan assessment activities and processes

Learner guide

TAASS401

Explore a unit of competency

You should unpack a unit of competency and consider each part of the unit to form a picture of what a competent person looks like, how assessment should occur and what evidence is required.

The following table summarises the components of a unit of competency, as defined in the TAE Training and Education Training Package Implementation Guide.

Component feature	What it relates to
Unit of competency	
Title	The title describes the unit outcome.
Unit application	This field describes how the unit is practically applied, who would typically use it and the unit of competency's relationship to licensing, legislative or certification requirements.
Prerequisite units	This is an optional field that specifies any unit/s in which the learner must already be competent prior to achieving competency in this unit.
Unit Sector	This field is used to categorise units of competency in relation to industry sectors or types of work.
Elements of competency	Elements of competency describe the outcomes of the significant functions and tasks that make up the competency. Elements describe actions or outcomes that are demonstrable and assessable.
Performance criteria	Performance criteria specify the required performance in relevant tasks, roles, skills (including foundation skills) and the applied knowledge that enables competent performance.
Foundation skills	This field describes the language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills that are essential to performance.
Range of conditions	This is an optional field that specifies different work environments and conditions that may affect performance. Range is restricted to essential operating conditions and any other variables essential to the work environment, so it is quite different from the previous range statement.
Unit mapping information	This field specifies the code and title of any equivalent unit of competency.
Links	This field provides a link to the Companion Volume Implementation Guide.
Assessment requirements	
Performance evidence	Performance evidence, as the name implies, specifies what individuals must do to show that they satisfy the performance standards in the unit of competency.

Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

1A Identify the candidate and confirm the purposes and context of the assessment with relevant people according to legal, organisational and ethical requirements

1B Identify and access applicable industry or workplace standards for the assessment, and any specific assessment requirements

Determine the assessment approach

Assessors working in a competency-based assessment system are responsible for judging evidence presented by a candidate and making a decision regarding the candidate's competence in regard to a specific set of benchmarking criteria. The role of an assessor includes evaluating the context of assessment and the individual needs of potential candidates, and developing a plan for assessment. The plan should describe the methods that will be used to gather the evidence in order to make judgments of competence that satisfy the requirements of the frameworks that regulate training and qualifications in Australia.

1A Identify the candidate and confirm the purposes and context of the assessment with relevant people according to legal, organisational and ethical requirements

It is essential that you understand your role and responsibilities in the assessment process so you can perform your duties competently and appropriately.
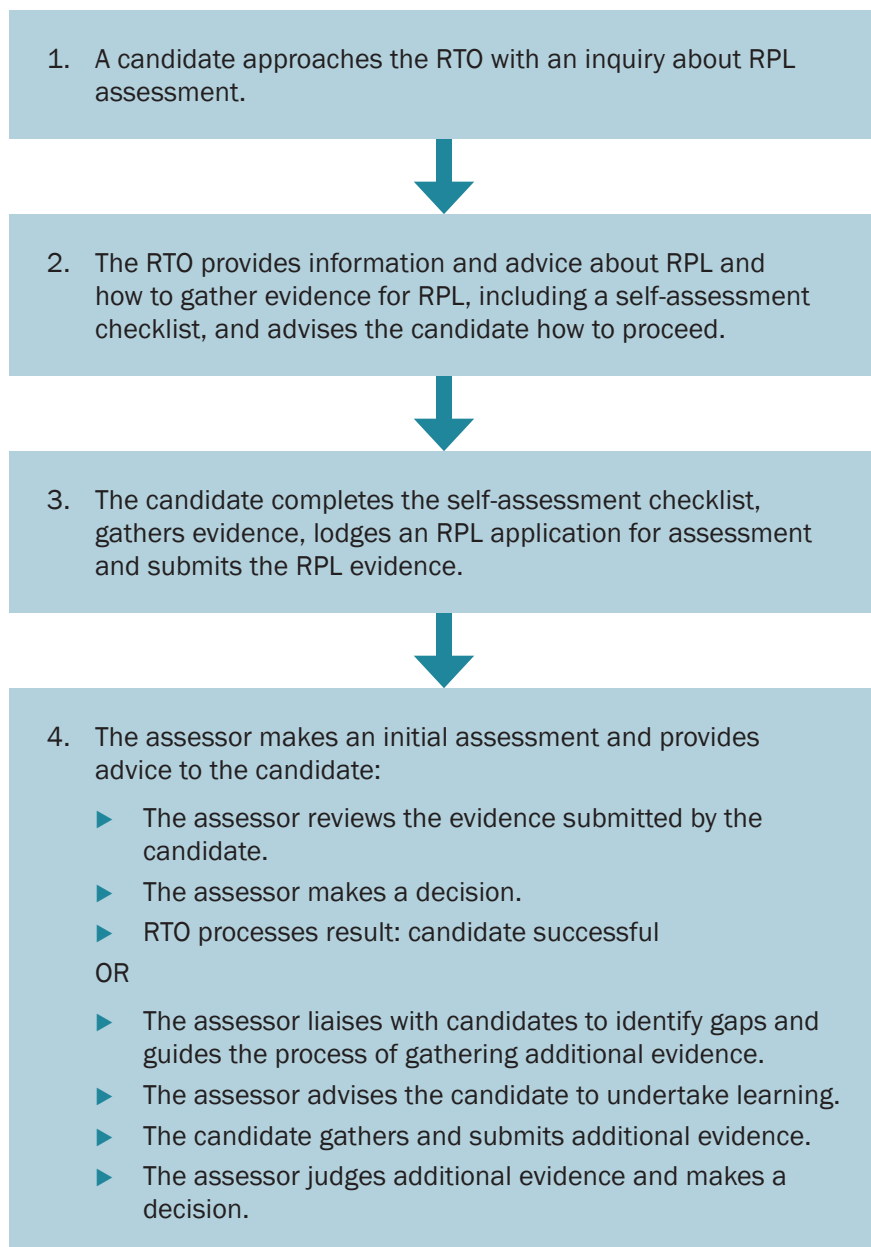
Vocational education and training is a competency-based system, so you need to understand that competency-based assessment is a process of systematically gathering and interpreting a candidate's evidence, then making a judgment on their performance based on industry units of competency and/or learning outcomes. If the evidence meets the set benchmarks then they are assessed as 'competent'; if there are gaps in their skills or knowledge they are assessed as 'not yet competent'.

Your role in assessment

Your role and responsibilities in planning assessment activities and processes is determined by your job description and where you are employed; for example, whether you are employed as a qualified professional trainer or assessor in an RTO, an assessor in an organisation's learning and development team, or as a workplace supervisor with assessment responsibilities. Whatever the situation, you need to understand the organisation's assessment strategy, processes, policies and practices so you can successfully plan and organise assessments.

Use the following when planning and organising assessments:

▶ Research skills to identify candidate characteristics; access relevant training packages; identify appropriate units of competency and assessment tools

▶ Cognitive skills to contextualise assessment for different learners

▶ Excellent literacy skills to read and interpret information; if you are new to assessment, you need to understand terminology related to training packages, units of competency and competency-based assessment strategies

▶ Sound communication and interpersonal skills to discuss aspects of assessment with all relevant people involved in the process

1. A candidate approaches the RTO with an inquiry about RPL assessment.

2. The RTO provides information and advice about RPL and how to gather evidence for RPL, including a self-assessment checklist, and advises the candidate how to proceed.

3. The candidate completes the self-assessment checklist, gathers evidence, lodges an RPL application for assessment and submits the RPL evidence.

4. The assessor makes an initial assessment and provides advice to the candidate:

   ▶ The assessor reviews the evidence submitted by the candidate.
   ▶ The assessor makes a decision.
   ▶ RTO processes result: candidate successful

   OR

   ▶ The assessor liaises with candidates to identify gaps and guides the process of gathering additional evidence.
   ▶ The assessor advises the candidate to undertake learning.
   ▶ The candidate gathers and submits additional evidence.
   ▶ The assessor judges additional evidence and makes a decision.

Benefits of RPL

Recognition of prior learning offers a range of benefits to both workers and their employers as described here.

Benefits to individuals

▶ Saves time as they do not need to participate in learning activities
▶ May provide an opportunity to apply for promotion or new job roles
▶ May enhance self-esteem and motivation

Benefits to employers

▶ Allows them to identify workforce competence
▶ Promotes a workplace learning culture
▶ Supports continuous improvement and quality management
▶ Allows them to access skills and knowledge available in the existing workforces
▶ Motivates workers

The assessment environment

In planning assessment, you need to confirm the environment where assessment will occur. This could be in the candidate's actual workplace, in a simulated workplace or a mixture of both. A simulated environment is useful where learners are studying in an off-the-job environment but require exposure to experiences that reflect those in the workplace.
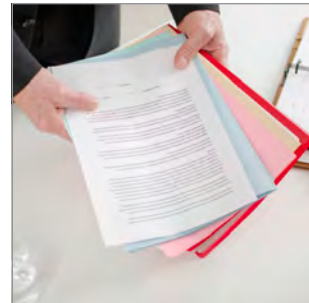
In cases where you need to gather evidence in a simulated workplace, you need to ensure that the learner has access to resources such as technology, equipment and workplace policies and procedures that would be available to them in an actual workplace. Confirm also that the environment meets work health and safety (WHS) requirements to allow the candidate to perform their tasks safely and with no hazard to their health.

Opportunities to collect evidence

The assessment requirements section of individual units of competency specifies that evidence should be gathered on more than one occasion and in a variety of forms. The candidate must be informed of how this evidence will be collected.

You may find that in order to satisfy the evidence requirements you need to ensure that the learner provides evidence gathered from their workplace in the form of observations and demonstrations, work samples and third-party reports that are supplemented with evidence gathered off-site in a formal learning environment using an instrument such as a final assignment or report.

Who carries out the assessment?

Identify and confirm who will be carrying out the assessment and how the assessment outcomes will be recorded and reported to them. The assessment must be conducted by a person with the qualifications defined in the relevant training package. In most cases, an assessor is required to have a training and assessment qualification, a qualification related to and at least to the level of the competency they are assessing, as well as industry and VET currency. Evidence that contributes to assessment may be contributed by a third party such as a workplace supervisor, colleague or customer.

Example

Identify the candidate and confirm the purposes and context of the assessment with relevant people according to requirements

Tony is employed as a trainer/assessor at Primary Training Solutions, an RTO that offers courses in training and assessment, frontline management and workplace health and safety. The company conducts training and assessment on-site for personnel employed by some of Australia's largest producers of natural resources.

Tony has been given the task of delivering training and conducting assessment on-site at DMaq, a mine located near Mackay in Northern Queensland. He will be delivering and assessing a course in Certificate IV in Leadership and Management to a group of learners who have been employed at the mine in various trades and who have been identified as having the potential to move into leadership management roles. Many of the learners have great expertise in their trades and workplace health and safety but have little experience in leadership positions. Many have also not undertaken formal, group learning since completing their apprenticeship many years earlier.

The mine's management team explains to Tony at their initial meeting that they are keen to recognise the current competencies of learners, particularly in regard to units on workplace health and safety and risk management. Before travelling to Mackay, Tony accesses the training.gov.au website and downloads the information about the Certificate IV in Leadership and Management qualification and each of the units of competency in the qualification that are on the RTO's scope of registration. He also accesses the Primary Training Solutions assessment plan for the delivery of this qualification.

Tony begins the process of determining his assessment process by reviewing the information that candidates have provided on a candidate profile form. He determines that in addition to the information he has been given by management, three learners have disabilities that could impact on their ability to complete written assessments; there are also two Indigenous Australians, several candidates left school before completing Year 10, and one learner is very reluctant to participate in the program.

Tony checks the assessment plan and his workplace policies and procedures for information about equity arrangements to support the needs of these candidates and to promote inclusivity in learning and assessment.

Tony realises that many of the learners should apply for recognition of current competence for the workplace health and safety unit that is included in the qualification. He arranges a meeting with all learners and explains the process for recognising current competence and describes the methods they could use to gather a portfolio of evidence. He also explains to the learners that he will meet with each of them individually to discuss their learning and assessment needs and the recognition process with them prior to commencement of the course.
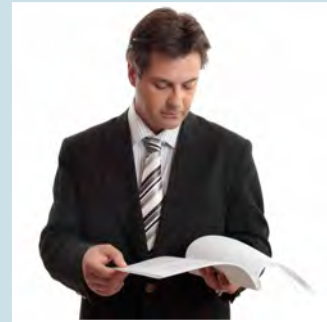
Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

2A Analyse units of competency and assessment requirements to identify evidence needed to demonstrate competence, according to the rules of evidence

2B Select assessment methods and instruments to support the collection of defined evidence, taking into account the context in which the assessment will take place

2C Develop the assessment plan and gain approval from relevant stakeholders

Prepare the assessment plan

Assessment plans are a key component of the organisation's assessment process. They are designed to align with the organisation's assessment strategy and provide important advice to ensure assessors comply with their VQF/AQTF obligations. An assessment plan also contains information of interest to the candidate and their employer.

During the development phase of the assessment plan, you should record the purpose of assessment, the context of assessment, the needs of candidates and the benchmarks that will be used to judge performance. This information underpins the decisions you make to determine appropriate methods for gathering the evidence by which you judge competence.

2A Analyse units of competency and assessment requirements to identify evidence needed to demonstrate competence, according to the rules of evidence

Assessment relies on judging whether the evidence presented by a candidate demonstrates their competence in regard to specific benchmarking criteria.

In this section, you will examine the three types of evidence that you will use for assessment and the various forms they may take. Understanding and applying the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment is critical when making judgments about competency. If you are employed by an RTO you should ensure that you are familiar with the *Users' guide to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015*. This guide provides essential information for the registration and obligation to conduct assessment in accordance with the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.

Satisfy the rules of evidence

Evidence is information that provides proof of competency. While evidence must be sufficient, trainers and assessors must focus on quality rather than the quantity of evidence.

There are four rules of evidence that guide the collection of evidence. These are described in detail here with an example.

Sufficient
Sufficiency requires that evidence of the learner's competency is demonstrated across all aspects of the unit of competency and has been demonstrated repeatedly. In some cases it may be difficult to gather sufficient evidence using a summative assessment instrument and the assessor should make arrangements to gather supplementary information. This may involve requesting a third-party report where the learner is observed performing a specific skill. Example: The candidate is completing a course in website design and development. She has compiled a portfolio of evidence of the various websites she has created as she progressed through the course. She will be completing a final case study where she will be holistically assessed against the performance evidence and knowledge evidence components of the relevant unit of competency. Her assessor has organised for the candidate's supervisor to complete a third-party report in order to gather evidence of the candidate's competence to work as a member of a team. Teamwork is identified as a foundation skill in the unit of competency.

Here are some examples of the foundation skills for the FNS20115 Certificate II in Financial Services unit of competency *FNSFLT206 Develop knowledge of taxation* from the Financial Services Training Package.

Skill	Performance criteria	Description
Reading	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	Accesses, interprets and collates information from a range of sources and identifies key relevant information for the task
Oral communication	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	Uses active listening and questioning to develop a clear understanding of topics and issues, and participates in verbal exchanges to share information
Numeracy	2.3, 3.3, 4.1	Interprets financial information relating to taxation to determine how calculations are made
Navigate the world of work	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	Maintains up-to-date knowledge of taxation necessary for own situation
Get the work done	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	Plans and organises tasks according to defined requirements Uses digital systems and tools to source and analyse information

Gather evidence

The following steps may help you plan the types of evidence that need to be collected for assessment.

Evidence collection
1. Review the picture of competence; that is, what a person will look like as they complete the task in the workplace.
2. Identify the evidence required to demonstrate competency, including performance and knowledge evidence.
3. Consider the rules of evidence – how to gather evidence that is sufficient, valid, current and authentic.
4. Make sure the instructions for collecting evidence do not have higher levels of LLN than required for the unit.
5. Identify where the evidence will come from.

2C Develop the assessment plan and gain approval from relevant stakeholders

An important part of planning an assessment is to prepare a plan documenting each step in the process of assessing a candidate's performance.

The assessment plan is usually prepared using a template or form that has been prepared for this specific purpose in your workplace. Make sure you confirm the plan with relevant personnel. It may be your responsibility to develop the plan or it may already have been developed and it is your responsibility to follow it.

The assessment plan shows:

▶ who the assessment is for

▶ the evidence required

▶ the processes, activities and instruments for collecting the evidence

▶ resources needed

▶ who will be involved and their responsibilities

Learners with equity considerations should be provided with a personal plan. This will outline the adjustments to assessment processes to comply with reasonable adjustment principles.

Prepare an assessment plan

List the various people who refer to the assessment plan to help you determine the information you need to include on the plan, and the tone and style of language you use to record information. In some cases the candidate will receive a copy of the plan along with the candidate's workplace supervisor. Ask your trainer for the 'Assessment plan' template in Aspire's *Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

Items included in an assessment plan are outlined here.

Purpose of assessment	Candidates may present for assessment to achieve recognition of their existing competence or to achieve a qualification, to fulfil their licensing or compliance requirements; as a component of the organisation's performance appraisal system or to be considered for promotion.
Benchmarks used to assess competence	The benchmarks could be an individual or cluster of units of competency or performance standards developed by an individual organisation.
Profile of the target group	The profile should summarise the characteristics and needs of the candidates including any reasonable adjustments that need to be made to ensure access and equity.
Others involved in the assessment process	List everyone who will be involved including trainers, assessors, technical experts, disability support staff, workplace supervisors and cultural advisors.

Activity 5

In this Activity, you have an opportunity to practise your skills in preparing an assessment plan. You may record the assessment plan using this template, or a form or template available in your workplace for this purpose.

Complete task 1, 2 or 3.

Retain copies of your completed assessment plan for possible assessment evidence for this unit.

1. Prepare an assessment plan for a unit of competency that you are responsible for assessing on behalf of your RTO.

2. Take this opportunity to consolidate what you have learnt so far by preparing an assessment plan for another unit of competency; for example, you may find it beneficial to practise preparing an assessment plan for a different AQF level.

3. Prepare an assessment plan for the unit of *SIRXCOM001 Communicate in the workplace to support team and customer outcomes* from the Retail Services Training Package. Access the unit of competency from www.training.gov.au.

Assessment plan	
Unit of competency:	
Purpose of assessment:	
Target group (candidates)	
Assessors	
Location of assessment	
Timing of assessment	
Methods of assessment	
Resources required for assessment	
Evidence required	
Special considerations for assessment	
Reporting arrangements for assessment	

Summary

4. The assessment requirements must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, knowledge evidence, performance evidence, foundation skills and assessment conditions.

5. In order to satisfy the rules of evidence, evidence must be valid, authentic, sufficient and reliable.

6. When developing assessment instruments, you need to ensure that the principles of assessment are met. High-quality assessments must be fair, flexible, valid and reliable.

7. Assessment instruments are the specific templates and other forms that are used for collecting evidence.

8. Direct evidence is anything the candidate has produced or for which they have been primarily responsible.

9. Indirect evidence is proof of candidate work that was gathered off the job and can be reviewed or examined by assessors.

10. Supplementary evidence is additional evidence presented by candidates to demonstrate competence.

11. The decision about which assessment method you should use to gather evidence is grounded in the context of assessment.

12. An assessment plan is a document developed by an assessor that includes:
    ▶ the unit of competency or performance criteria to be assessed
    ▶ when the assessment will occur
    ▶ how the assessment will occur
    ▶ the assessment location
    ▶ the assessment methods to be used
    ▶ an overview of instructions for the candidate.

13. When identifying what needs to be assessed you also need to consider the dimensions of competency and foundation skills.

14. Always confirm your assessment plan with the relevant people to ensure it is accurate and the outcome will be a quality assessment that meets all guidelines and standards.

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

3A Use information from the candidate and, where relevant, the candidate's workplace to identify contextualisation needs

3B Check advice provided by the training package or course developer relevant to identified contextualisation needs

3C Analyse existing assessment tools and record amendments required to address identified contextualisation needs

3D Determine opportunities for integrated assessment activities and record any changes required to assessment tools

Identify modification and contextualisation requirements

An assessment system must not discriminate against anyone, so it is important to learn how to contextualise the assessment and modify it to meet the industry or workplace needs of each candidate. It may be necessary to customise assessment activities so they refer more specifically to the candidate's own workplace policies, equipment and personnel. You may also need to make adjustments to the assessment process to meet a candidate's specific needs.

As you work through this guide you will learn how to make adjustments so the assessment meets individual needs and, at the same time, continues to satisfy the evidence requirements specified in the units of competency.

3A Use information from the candidate and, where relevant, the candidate's workplace to identify contextualisation needs

As discussed in Topic 1 it is important to gather information about the candidate so you can contextualise the assessment and make adjustments, as necessary, to meet the principles of assessment. This may mean providing support that enables the candidate to participate in an assessment process that is fair and relevant to their industry or workplace experience and at the same time satisfies the evidence requirements specified in the units of competency.

Principles of equity

The principles of assessment require that when developing and planning assessment activities and processes, the principles of fairness and flexibility are applied. High-quality assessments always ensure that assessments align to practices that are equitable. Two of the four principles of assessment directly relate to contextualisation consideration.

Two principles of assessment:

▶ Fair – they must not be discriminatory or disadvantage the candidate in any way.
▶ Flexible – they must meet the candidate's individual needs and include a range of appropriate assessment methods.

Information from the candidate

Information gathered from a leaner profile can provide important material that can assist you in tailoring the assessment to meet the particular needs of the candidate. The characteristics of the candidate identified in a profile can influence the assessment process and should be considered in the planning and developing of assessment methods and instruments.

Characteristics of a candidate may include:

▶ age
▶ work experience – current and previous
▶ previous education
▶ cultural background
▶ language, literacy and numeracy issues
▶ disability
▶ access to technology
▶ learning environment
▶ support from other people
▶ degree of experience with an assessment process.

Quality assessment tools

The following information outlines the key components of a quality assessment tool. It may be useful to refer to when working through this learner guide.

Key components of a quality assessment tool	
Assessment context	The assessment context is a description of the: ▶ target group and purpose of assessment ▶ characteristics of the candidate that may impact on the assessment such as LLN levels, age, education and work experience ▶ learning environment, such as workplace, classroom-based or online.
Competency mapping	▶ Competency mapping is a description of the relationship between individual parts of the assessment instrument and the unit of competency. ▶ You must demonstrate the linkages between components of the assessment and the elements, performance criteria, foundation skills and required knowledge and assessment requirements identified in the unit of competency.
Materials and resources required	▶ This section outlines any materials and resources that may be required to complete assessment.
Tasks to be administered	▶ Tasks the candidate must complete are outlined in an assessment plan. For example, respond to questions; undertake a role-play; write a report; prepare meeting minutes; do a presentation; complete a project; or present a portfolio of work samples and third-party reports. ▶ The assessment method must be appropriate to collect the required evidence; for example, direct observation, structured activities, oral questioning – see 'Reasonable adjustment'.
Evidence required	▶ Evidence is what is needed to demonstrate competency; for example, a portfolio of written work samples such as minutes, reports, correspondence; a checklist recording observations during a role-play; a performance appraisal report; third-party reports; or certificates for completed courses.

Make amendments

Once the existing assessment tools have been adjusted to reflect the contextualising needs of the candidate, the various draft versions of the assessment instrument can be saved and the RTO's record- keeping system can be kept as evidence of continuous improvement processes. Remember to use appropriate version control methods to clearly identify the revised version of the assessment tool. Check the training organisation's policies and procedures for advice on the preferred version control method. It is essential that you follow your organisation's guidelines for version control to ensure that assessors select the most recent assessment instrument from the organisation's record-keeping system. Remember that the final assessment tool will be validated according to the training organisation's assessment validation policies and procedures prior to use.

Contextualising assessment tools often involves the following adjustments:

Generally recommendations are for:

1 **Instructions**
Giving clearer instructions to candidates and assessors

2 **Context**
Changing the method of assessment so it can be used in a wider range of assessment contexts; for example, online, group learning or workplace assessment

3 **Reasonable adjustment**
Providing clearer advice to candidates and assessors about reasonable adjustment; for example, LLN or cultural contexts

4 **Assist understanding**
Providing checklists, diagrams or flowcharts to help candidates understand what they are required to do

5 **Resources**
Ensuring candidates have access to necessary resources, such as technology to assist with disabilities, like braille devices

6 **Conditions of assessment**
Changing the conditions of assessment to more closely simulate a workplace or industry; for example, it may be appropriate to assess using a simulation rather than a written, closed-book assessment

7 **Adjust methods**
Adjusting the assessment methods so they are more accessible for the candidate

8 **Guidelines for evidence gathering**
Writing clearer guidelines for making reasonable adjustments to evidence-gathering methods; for example, assessment instruments that are used in remote Indigenous communities should better reflect the language and literacy levels of candidates

Topic 4

In this topic you will learn how to:

4A Analyse available assessment instruments for their suitability for use, and identify any required modifications

4B Develop assessment instruments to meet the required standard and specific workplace/candidate needs

4C Map assessment instruments against the unit or course requirements

4D Write clear instructions for the candidate and assessor regarding the use of assessment instruments

4E Check and confirm that draft assessment instruments meet required standards and specific workplace/candidate needs and record outcomes of checks

Develop the assessment instruments

Once your assessment plan has been prepared, you need to source or develop appropriate assessment instruments for identifying and recording competence. Your workplace may have developed a bank of assessment instruments you can evaluate. You may find a pre-existing assessment instrument that you can either use immediately or modify to suit the context of assessment, and for alignment with the assessment plan.

You can expect that at various times you may be required to develop a new assessment instrument that suits the specific requirements of the assessment plan.

Example

Analyse available assessment instruments for their suitability for use, and identify any required modifications

This semester, Lourdes has been asked to deliver and assess the unit of competency *BSBWOR501 Manage personal work priorities and professional development*.

She unpacks the unit of competency and retrieves the assessment instruments that were used in the college for this unit last semester. She works with her colleague, Ron, to review the instruments to confirm whether they comply with the principles and rules of evidence.

Lourdes records their findings using the form that has been developed for this purpose in her workplace. This is what they find.

BSB51915 Diploma of Leadership and Management

BSBWOR501 Manage personal work priorities and professional development

Assessment instruments consist of:
- team member checklist
- supervisor checklist – third-party report
- learner guide
- knowledge questions
- journal entry (tool not sighted)
- workplace project scenario.

Assessment principles:

Assessment of this unit complies with the principle of validity by addressing:

Y	N	NA	
☐	☑	☐	Elements and performance criteria
☐	☑	☐	Knowledge evidence
☐	☑	☐	Foundation skills
☐	☑	☐	Assessment requirements – performance evidence
☑	☐	☐	Context and consistency of assessment
☑	☐	☐	Assessment methods
☑	☐	☐	Application appropriate to the unit's AQF level

Assessment of this unit complies with the principle of reliability as each assessment activity:

Y	N	NA	
☐	☑	☐	Is supported by consistent benchmark criteria for acceptable performance
☐	☑	☐	Is conducted and assessed against the benchmark criteria
☐	☑	☐	Is supported by clear information for assessors about assessment requirements