Policy Name	Assessment Policy
Date	25 October 2023
Responsible dept.	Learning & Development
Current Version	V7

PURPOSE

Effective and objective assessment is critical to the successful implementation of competency standards in VET. To this end, it is imperative that all CAL assessors understand and conform to the Principles of Assessment and conduct assessments in a manner that is valid, reliable, fair, and flexible and that all CAL learners understand what competency means in VET as well as the application of workplace assessment.

SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all CAL students.

CAL has established this policy to support the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.*

DEFINITIONS

Assessment: The process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed by the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards of a training package or by the learning outcomes of an accredited course.

Recognition of Prior Learning: The process for giving candidates credit for skills, knowledge and experience gained through working and learning.

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.

1. The assessment system complies with the following principles:

1.1. VALIDITY: The assessment tools assess what they claim to assess and what they have been designed to assess according to the relevant performance/assessment criteria and incorporating the relevant foundational skills required at the stipulated level.

1.2 AUTHENTICITY: The evidence collected is authentic, that is, it comes from valid sources and is directly attributable to the individual submitting the evidence.

1.3 RELIABILITY: Reliable assessments use methods and procedures to ensure that the competency standards are interpreted and applied consistently from person to person and from context to context. The following are important to ensure that assessment produces consistent outcomes:

- Clear, unambiguous, well documented assessment procedures and competency standards,

- Clear, consistent, and specific assessment criteria,

- Effectively trained, briefed, and monitored assessors,

- Adequate assessors across industries and with a lead assessor for each industry sector to guide and support the assessor team, which ensures a quality outcome, and

- Assessment encourages 'reasonable adjustment' i.e., it is carried out within a system flexible enough to cope with multiple and diverse forms of evidence.

1.4 CONSISTENCY: The assessment system must ensure that evidence collected and submitted for judgement is consistent across the range, without undue reliance on any one form of evidence. At CAL this includes a variety of formative assessment activities along with a comprehensive workplace task.

1.5 CURRENCY: Under an effective system, assessment evaluates whether the individual's skills, knowledge and attributes are current and can be applied in the workplace of today. This is particularly important where technology is involved in work-related practices. As a rule, competencies that have not been demonstrated within the past three years are not usually accepted as current however, and under some circumstances an assessor may make exceptions to the specified period. For example, the competencies necessary to be able to write a policy may not have changed over a period of three or more years. Once you know how to do it, this competency remains current indefinitely. In such cases, evidence from a time greater than three years may be admissible and assessed for currency.

1.6 SUFFICIENCY: Evidence of competency should be sufficient to cover all the elements, performance/assessment criteria and relevant foundation skills against which the assessment is to be carried out. In a competency framework the individual needs to provide only that evidence which demonstrates competence, more of the same does not 'improve' this competence. An effective assessment system ensures that candidates are clearly advised as to the amount and form of evidence which is sufficient to competence. This is particularly relevant for an RPL assessment and/or an assessment by a portfolio of evidence. In situations where the learner completes a structured formative and summative assessment this is not usually an issue.

1.7 FLEXIBILITY: All candidates can identify and develop their own evidence to support their competency. In an RPL or workplace project scenario the candidate is advised as to the types of evidence best able to demonstrate their competency along with a scope of evidence (sufficiency). In learner programs, candidates are guided by the set activities and assessment tasks required to demonstrate competency, however, should the candidate decide to submit a different/alternative form of evidence, CAL assessors with judge the evidence in the same way and, according to the performance/assessment criteria.

1.8 FAIRNESS AND EQUITY: An assessment system and its processes must not disadvantage any person or organisation. All eligible candidates are given access to assessment and not discriminated against. Furthermore, candidates with special needs may require additional considerations regarding how they present their evidence to an assessor. In such cases the assessor may discuss the submission with the industry lead assessor and/or their line manager to ensure a fair and equitable assessment process is followed.

1.9 REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT: To meet the needs of all learners, adjustments can be made to the way assessments are conducted however, this does not impact on the requirements of the assessment. The purpose of such reasonable adjustment is to enhance fairness and flexibility to ensure that any specific needs of individual learners are met. Some examples of reasonable adjustment include:

- Providing additional time for a learner to practice/apply their learning for the assessment task,

- Presenting questions orally for students with literacy issues,

- Asking questions in a relevant, practical context,

- Presenting work instructions for example, as diagrams or in pictorial form instead of words and sentences,

- Providing access to a case-study workplace that will give the learner the opportunity to engage in a 'simulated' work environment.

Assessors have a responsibility to assess the learners' needs and make reasonable adjustments as necessary and in line with the competency requirements.

2. Simulated Assessment (Case Studies)

Simulation is a form of evidence gathering that involves the candidate in completing or dealing with a task, activity or problem in an off-the-job situation that replicates the workplace context. Simulations at CAL are based on fictional organisations with a variety of workplace scenarios.

In developing case study simulations, the emphasis is not so much on reproducing the external circumstance but on creating situations in which candidates are able to demonstrate:

- Technical skills,

- Underpinning knowledge,

- Generic skills such as decision making and problem solving,

- Specific workplace practices such as effective communication.

CAL has developed comprehensive case study organisations and, where applicable, learners access components of it to demonstrate their competency. This holistic approach to case study development means that assessors need only familiarise themselves with the core case study materials once. Once they have accessed the core materials, they will have gained a good understanding of the company and how it functions and then, for specific units, a further pack of materials is provided to both learners and assessors.

3. Informing Candidates of the Recognition of Prior Learning Process (RPL)

RPL can be accessed in two ways:

- As a candidate applying for RPL services only for an entire qualification, group of units or unit,

- As a learner enrolled in the training program and accessing RPL for one or more of the units contained in the qualification they are enrolled in.

It is up to the candidate to select RPL as an option. CAL informs all students of RPL 'Recognising your Prior Learning Unit' on Spark however, the decision to RPL sits with the candidate. Coaches may suggest learners enrolled in a training program complete RPL for one or more units in the program and they explain what is required. However, it is the student who makes the decision to RPL or not.

Generally speaking, candidates have one attempt at RPL although the assessor will often contact the candidate to ask them to provide more or different evidence in support of their claim. When the assessor is satisfied that the evidence is fair, valid, reliable, and sufficient they will publish the result.

Where candidates are enrolled for RPL only they are given access to an RPL coaching call with their assigned RPL assessor. The assessor explains the assessment process and provides potential examples of suitable assessment evidence that the candidate might be able to locate. The candidate then collects and notates their evidence using a portfolio approach. Once complete the RPL application is submitted to the assessor.

The assessor reviews and marks off the evidence submitted against the relevant assessment criteria and, where possible, judges that the evidence provided demonstrates competence. Where the evidence does not yet fully demonstrate competence, the assessor may contact the candidate to request further (specific) evidence which will then result in a competent judgement. Where the evidence fails to demonstrate competence for all the stated criteria the assessor will judge the candidate 'not yet competent'. No additional submissions apply.

For further information see the CAL RPL Policy
https://collegeforadultlearning.edu.au/students/student-documents/.

4. Assessment Appeals

Students who are dissatisfied with their assessment outcome may apply for an assessment appeal.

For more information, please see the Assessment Appeals Policy.

5. Feedback

Where students are assessed as 'pending' in any assessment submission, their assessor will provide clear and detailed feedback as to why the submission is not yet competent along with what needs to be done to demonstrate competency.

Students are encouraged to book a coaching call with their coach/assessor to discuss their assessment feedback in more detail if they require further clarification. CAL coaches and assessors are committed to providing students with the information they need to assist them in achieving the required performance standard on reassessment.

6. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and will not be tolerated at CAL. Plagiarism is taking and using someone else's thoughts, writings, or inventions and representing them as your own. This is a serious act and may result in a learner's exclusion from a unit of study and/or an entire course. This also includes presenting group work as your own. Examples of plagiarism include:

- Presenting any work by another individual as one's own (either knowingly or unknowingly),

- Copying the assessment submission of another learner and handing it in as your own,

- Presenting the work of a group as your own (without clearly stipulating exactly what you have produced),

- Submitted work containing unsourced quotes and acknowledgements (including web addresses where applicable),

- Submitting work that was written by generative AI (ChatGPT) without sourcing it as such.

From time to time the online materials suggest you copy or reproduce something from them, where this is the case there is no plagiarism, however, where a learner simply copies and pastes definitions from an online source and portrays it as 'their own words' plagiarism applies.

For more information, please see the CAL Plagiarism Policy
https://collegeforadultlearning.edu.au/students/student-documents/.

7. Supporting Documents

A number of documents support the assessment process at CAL including:

- CAL Student Handbook,

- Appeals Policy,

- RPL Policy,

- Plagiarism Policy.

Submitting Assessments

When submitting an assessment to CAL, students are required to:

- Use the online submission tool, agreeing to the Student Declarations,

- Clearly label any submissions with their name, the assessment topic/unit code and date,

- Present their work professionally by using a word processing program,

- Retain a copy of the original.

Evidence

Assessments submitted to CAL must meet the following rules of evidence.

- Valid – the evidence supplied must answer the questions posed by the assessment tool, underpinned by the related competency standard,

- Sufficient – the evidence supplied must be consistent with guidance provided within the assessment tool on the evidence required to demonstrate competence in a particular unit,

- Authentic – the evidence supplied must be the students own work and a declaration must be signed by the student confirming this,

- Current – the evidence supplied must be relevant and current as specified in the relevant unit of competency.

Marking Assessments

Once an assessment meets the requirements for that unit of competency, the student will be assessed as Competent.

If any assessment criteria have not been addressed, the assessment will be marked as Pending and the student will be requested to submit additional information. The student will be advised of this by email and given the opportunity to have a coaching call with the assessor.

Assessment Results

Assessors are required to record their feedback and results in Spark. Results of Competent or Not Yet Competent will be recorded in CAL's Student Management System (SMS).

Students will be informed of their results via Spark.

Assessment by RPL

All students will be informed of the option to RPL prior to enrolment as part of their initial interview. RPL will also be discussed with the student by their CAL learning coach during the initial coaching call after enrolment but prior to commencement of the course.

If a student wishes to RPL a unit, a meeting will be scheduled between the student and assessor.

Students will be provided with an RPL Self-Assessment Checklist to complete and submit to CAL along with supporting evidence.

Where recognition for an application is granted, CAL will ensure that this information is communicated in writing within a reasonable timeframe. A mark of RPL will be recorded on CAL's student management system (SMS).

Assessment Moderation and Validation

CAL's Director of Learning and Development in consultation with assessors will be responsible for regular review of assessment tools, practices, and procedures.

Assessments will be moderated regularly. Results of moderation will be evaluated and required improvements made.

Assessments will be validated any time there are changes made to the assessment contents. Otherwise, all assessments will be validated at least once every five years, as per the CAL: Validation Schedule.

Policy Administration			
Version	**Updated on**	**Approved by**	**Next Review Due**
1	14 May 2012	Helen Sabell	January 2014
2	10 January 2014	Helen Sabell	January 2015
3	20 June 2017	Sarah Sabell	June 2018
4	2 August 2018	Sarah Sabell	August 2019
5	14 August 2019	Sarah Sabell	August 2020
6	27 April 2020	Sarah Sabell	April 2021
7	26 October 2023	Sarah Sabell	October 2024
Compliance References			
Statutory	The *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* Clauses: 1.8 – 1.12		
Industry	Vocational Education and Training (VET)		
Document Located	E:\Public Documents\03_CAL Operations\CAL Policies\02_CAL POLICIES STUDENTS		