



# **ASSESSMENT**

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

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| Document ID                | Assessment Policy and Procedures  |
| Related Documents          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Industry Engagement Policy and Procedures;</li> <li>- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedures;</li> <li>- Trainer Competence Requirements Policy and Procedures;</li> <li>- Assessment Partnerships Policy and Procedures;</li> <li>- Assessment Validation Policy and Procedures;</li> <li>- Records and Data Management Policy and Procedures.</li> </ul>  |
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| References and Legislation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth);</li> <li>- Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2001;</li> <li>- National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.</li> <li>- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.</li> <li>- The Migration Act 1958</li> <li>- The Migration Regulations 1994</li> </ul> |

## **Assessment Policy**

At Hallmark Institute we recognise that assessment is a core service offered to our students and is at the centre of our operations as a Registered Training Organisation. Quality assessment ensures that the skills and knowledge of students are assessed using four principal determinants:

- That assessment decisions are based on the assessment of skills and knowledge compared with units of competency drawn from nationally endorsed Training Packages or accredited courses.
- That the target industry or enterprise requirements are contextualised and integrated within the assessment.
- That evidence is gathered that meets the rules of evidence.
- That assessment is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment.

### **Assessing the Unit of Competency**

Hallmark Institute uses units of competency drawn from nationally endorsed Training Packages as the primary benchmark for assessment. Supporting these sometimes are industry standards or codes of practice. These and other industry specific publications inform the context and standard of performance during assessment.

In order to identify the precise assessment criteria, we apply a methodology of unpacking a unit of competency in order to assess the full scope of the unit including elements of competence, performance evidence, knowledge evidence and the requirements of the assessment conditions. This process ensures that our assessment strategies accurately reflect the requirements of the relevant Training Package and are valid. To ensure alignment with all components of a unit of competency, unit mapping must be undertaken during the design and development of assessment. Unit mapping must also be undertaken when carrying out assessment validation.

Unit mapping will show the relationship between the planned assessment activities and each component of the unit. This must be conducted at a micro level of detail to allow the mapping to demonstrate the validity of the assessment. An assessment mapping document is available for this purpose.

### **Assessment context**

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

It is our responsibility to ensure that students are provided with the right context to undertake their assessment activities. To achieve this, we will apply the following strategies:

- Incorporation of the student's own workplace policies and procedures into the assessment scenario or activity, wherever possible.
- Conduct of the assessment in the student's workplace performing real workplace tasks wherever possible.
- Integration of relevant industry codes of practice and other industry information into the assessment activity.
- Incorporation of industry job descriptions for students to align with during realistic simulated workplace scenarios and case studies.
- Incorporation of regulatory information relating to licensing which applies to the unit of competency.
- Tailoring the course outcomes to meet the organisational training needs of the enterprise without compromising the Training Package requirements.
- Creating assessment activities which require the student to conduct specific research relating to industry situations and occurrences where applicable.
- Provide a realistic simulated workplace within Hallmark Institute's facilities where training and assessment is not conducted in the workplace.

While applying these strategies it is important to ensure that in establishing the context for assessment we do not affect the transferability of the unit of competency. When the student is assessed as competent, this also means that the student can transfer the applicable skills and knowledge between different workplaces and contexts. This means that the competency is transferable which is a fundamental element of competency based training and assessment.

### **Principles of assessment**

In the delivery of assessment services, Hallmark Institute applies the principles of assessment. Assessment strategies have been designed to ensure:

- **Validity.** We conduct assessment against the broad range of skills and knowledge identified within each unit of competency and which is integrated with the performance of workplace tasks. We ensure that the assessment is transferable to different context and situations and all components of the unit of competency are being assessed.
- **Reliability.** We seek to gather and interpret evidence in a consistent manner that provides for reliable assessment both for the student and for assessors. We achieve this by using assessors who have the

required competencies in assessment and the relevant vocational competencies. Our assessment resources also provide for standardised outcomes supported by model answers to guide assessors in their judgements. Reliability is also supported by the moderation of assessment judgements across our assessors.

- **Flexibility.** We strive to provide assessment opportunities that reflect a student's needs. Our chosen assessment strategies provide for recognition of a student's current competency, employ a range of methods appropriate to the context of the industry, the unit of competency and the student themselves.
- **Fairness.** Our assessment approach encourages fairness in assessment through consideration of the student's needs and characteristics and through making reasonable adjustments when it is required. Assessors achieve this through clear communication with a student to ensure that the student is fully informed about, understands and is able to participate in, the assessment process, and agrees that the process is appropriate.

### Collecting evidence that counts – the rules of evidence

In collecting evidence, Hallmark Institute applies the rules of evidence to inform the assessment strategy. Assessment strategies have been designed to ensure:

- **Sufficiency.** We ensure the collection of valid assessment evidence in such quantity to ensure that all aspects of competency have been satisfied and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly. The collection of sufficient assessment evidence will be supported by using a range of assessment methods which lead to the collection of evidence over time based on a range of performances.
- **Validity.** We collect evidence that directly aligns with the components documented within each unit of competency. The collected assessment evidence must replicate the outputs of the task as though it were being performed within an actual workplace. This may include the observation of the student performing the tasks relevant to the unit of competency or the collection of a completed workplace products. Assessment evidence that is purely academic in nature should be given a lesser priority to the collection of evidence that relates directly to the student performing the tasks indicative to the unit of competency.
- **Authenticity.** We seek evidence that is authentic. To support this, assessors must be assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the student's own work. Where documentary evidence is relied on it must be certified or supported by two other forms of evidence which demonstrate the same skill or knowledge. In all instances, where work is submitted external to Hallmark Institute (i.e.; electronically, distance assignments, online) this is to include a signed authenticity statement by the student that they certify the work as their own.
- **Currency.** We must be satisfied that the student currently holds the skills and knowledge relating to a particular unit of competency. Assessment evidence is to be based on the student's performance either at the time of the assessment decision or in the very recent past. Questions of evidence currency will mostly relate to recognition of prior learning applications where a student has been in the workplace for

many years and is seeking recognition of skills and knowledge obtained through workplace experience or previous training. In all situations, assessors must validate the currency of a student's knowledge and skills.

## **Employers and other parties contributing to assessment evidence**

Where industry representatives are engaged to contribute toward assessment evidence, Hallmark Institute will use a standard approach to collect this evidence. We place a high value on the assessment evidence that is gathered by supervisors or employers in the workplace. This evidence is usually very current and valid and contributes to the assessment decisions made by a qualified assessor. We do not however advocate the use of industry evidence (also referred to as third party evidence) as a substitute for the gathering of direct evidence by an assessor. In all areas of our operation, industry evidence is only to be used to complement and support the evidence being gathered by an assessor and is **not** to be used as primary evidence.

During the development of assessment tools, assessors are to ensure that the observation criteria used in industry evidence reports is wholly task orientated. These observation criteria should reflect the tasks that the supervisor would expect to issue to an employee and monitor during normal workplace duties. The industry evidence report is not to contain assessment criteria drawn from a unit of competency as these assessment criteria are suitable only for trained and qualified assessors to interpret.

It is also not desirable to collect industry evidence simply by providing a document to be completed. This leads to the collection of insufficient evidence and is an annoyance to industry. Where possible assessors are to engage with industry representatives directly and collect evidence about a student's performance through discussion with supervisors. This discussion will be based on observable workplace tasks and evidence is to be recorded by the assessor. These discussions may be undertaken face-to-face or over the phone. The assessor must record the industry representative's details, contact information and the date/time of the engagement.

## **Engagement with industry**

Hallmark Institute is well placed to leverage off current industry associations to incorporate industry requirements into the assessment process. Consultation with enterprises or industry will provide information about assessment requirements relevant to workplaces. Regulatory requirements that relate to specific units of competency will be incorporated to ensure our students are well prepared for their workplace duties. Further information on industry engagement can be found in the *Industry Engagement Policy*.

## **Recognition of prior learning**

Hallmark Institute will provide all students the opportunity to seek recognition of their prior learning. Recognition is viewed simply as another method of assessment and therefore is conducted in accordance with this policy. Further information can be found in the *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedures*.

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## **National Recognition (Credit transfer)**

Hallmark Institute will recognise and award national recognition for students presenting with current competence. Where a student is seeking national recognition for a unit of competency that is on our scope of registration and the student can provide documentary evidence that the unit has been previously awarded to the student, national recognition will be awarded. It is important to note that national recognition or credit transfer is not an assessment. It is an administrative function that determines the equivalence of a unit of competency the student has been previously awarded to units of competency incorporated into courses being delivered by Hallmark Institute. If the unit is the same or is equivalent, then the unit may be issued as a credit transfer. This is not to be confused with the recognition of prior learning which is a method of assessment.

## **Competence of assessors**

In accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations, assessors are required to hold the minimum competencies for training assessment and the vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed. Hallmark Institute has appropriate systems in place to ensure that all staff members are appropriately qualified to meet our requirement under the Standards for Registered Training Organisations. Further information can be found in the *Trainer Competency Requirements Policy*.

Where an assessor does not hold the required training and assessment competence, but is a recognised industry expert, we will put appropriate supervision arrangements in place to support the gathering of valid evidence. Further guidance on supporting these assessors can be found in the *Assessment Partnerships Policy*.

## **Assessment validation**

Assessment validation is the process where assessors compare and evaluate their assessment methods, assessment procedures and assessment decisions. Hallmark Institute will facilitate regular assessment validation opportunities to maintain a quality assessment and to continuously improve assessment strategies. Further information can be found in the *Assessment Validation Policy*.

## **Assessment tools**

Assessment tools are the media (electronic or hard copy) used to gather evidence about a student's competence. We have developed assessment tools which support the assessment of applicable units of competency in accordance with the requirements of industry Training Packages. It is important for Hallmark Institute staff members to acknowledge that these are generic tools which provide us with a starting point for the development of other supporting tools which will reflect the needs of our students or target industry group. Hallmark Institute staff members must be satisfied that tools developed for assessment fit with the requirements of the target industry and enterprise requirements. Some units of competency are associated with licensing requirements and whilst this is not always stipulated in the unit of competency, we will need to be informed of the additional requirements this imposes during assessment.

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

- Direct observation checklist;
- Simulation exercises or role-plays;
- Project outlines and explanation sheets;
- Workplace templates;
- Written questionnaires;
- Verbal questionnaires;
- Portfolios, for example collections of work samples by the student;
- Product with supporting documentation or journal/log book;
- Workplace samples/products; and
- Industry/workplace evidence reports.

This list of assessment tools identifies only a small number of assessment tools which are available. These are however the more common tools and support holistic assessment methods favoured by Hallmark Institute.

Completed assessment tools are to be retained within the student record in accordance with the *Records Retention and Data Management Policy*.

## **Assessment information**

Assessment information is the information provided to both students and assessors to guide their conduct of the assessment and the completion of assessment activities. This information is used to draw out a response from a student.

Examples of assessment information include:

- Instructions to set the framework for the activity such as who, what, where, when and how. The expected outcomes of the assessment should be included in these instructions and it is critical that they are straightforward and in line with the student's preparation during learning or through other competency development pathways.
- Scenario information includes information that sets the context for a simulated assessment activity. This may be a simple case study or an in-depth scenario which requires analysis and interpretation. It is



important to note that the higher the AQF qualification level, the greater the requirement to analyse and apply cognitive skills to produce workplace outcomes. Scenario information used to support assessment at a Diploma level, for example, should be relatively deep and complex to allow the student to exercise their analytical skills and produce viable workplace products and outcomes.

- Industry information includes items such as codes of practice, policies and procedures, legislation and regulations. Whilst this may not be provided in hard copy to every student, they should be provided contacts, websites or hyperlinks to access this information. Electronic copies of industry information are also acceptable.

At Hallmark Institute our assessment activities are to be supported by clear assessment information that will ensure a reliable assessment across our operations. Ultimately, the quality of assessment outcomes produced by a student will be directly affected by the quality of the information provided at the commencement of the activity. Hallmark Institute staff are to prepare suitable assessment information for all assessment activities and are to gain approval from Hallmark Institute's Academic Manager for the use of assessment resources.

## Re-assessment

Students who are assessed as not yet competent are to be provided with detailed verbal and written feedback to assist them to identify the gaps in their knowledge and skills to be addressed through further training. These students are to be provided with additional training and learning support to target their specific gaps in knowledge and/or skills and prepare them for additional assessment.

It is the policy of Hallmark Institute to provide **three** opportunities for additional training and re-assessment at no additional cost to the student or employer. Students who require additional training and re-assessment after they have exhausted their three opportunities will be required to pay a fee for additional training and re-assessment. Please refer to the current fee schedule to identify the re-assessment fee.

Students requiring additional learning support are to be brought to the attention of Hallmark Institute's Academic Manager so the progress of the student can be monitored closely and additional support services can be applied well before it becomes necessary to impose an additional fee for re-assessment. Where students repeatedly do not demonstrate competence following significant learning and assessment support, a student's enrolment status can be determined through mutual agreement.

## Assessment Procedure

The following procedure is to be applied for conducting assessments:

- **Step 1: Prepare for assessment.** The assessor is to:
  - Establish the context and purpose of the evidence to be collected;

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- Identify and analyse the units of competency, Training Package and Hallmark Institute's assessment strategy to identify the evidence requirements; and
  - Review the assessment tools and confirm their currency and adequacy in meeting the rules of evidence.
  - **Step 2: Prepare the student.** The assessor meets with the student to:
    - Explain the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process;
    - Explain the units of competency to be assessed and the evidence to be collected;
    - Outline the assessment procedure and the preparation the student should undertake, and answer any questions;
    - Assess the needs of the student and, where applicable, negotiate reasonable adjustment for assessing people with disabilities without compromising the competency outcomes;
    - Seek feedback regarding the student's understanding of the units of competency, evidence requirements and assessment process; and
    - Determine if the student is ready for assessment and, in consultation with the student, decide on the time and place of the assessment.
  - **Step 3: Plan and prepare the evidence-gathering process.** The assessor must:
    - Establish a plan for gathering sufficient quality evidence about the learner's consistent performance in order to make the assessment decision;
    - Source or develop assessment materials to assist the evidence-gathering process;
    - Organise equipment or resources required to support the evidence-gathering process; and
    - Coordinate and brief other personnel involved in the evidence-gathering process.
  - **Step 4: Collect the evidence and make the assessment decision.** The assessor must:
    - Establish and oversee the evidence-gathering process to ensure its validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility;
    - Collect appropriate evidence and match compatibility to the elements, performance criteria, range statement and evidence guide in the relevant units of competency;
    - Evaluate evidence in terms of the four dimensions of competency - task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills;

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- Incorporate allowable adjustments to the assessment procedure without compromising the integrity of the competencies;
  - Evaluate the evidence in terms of validity, consistency, currency, authenticity and sufficiency;
  - Consult and work with other staff, assessment panel members or technical experts involved in the assessment process;
  - Record details of evidence collected; and
  - Make a judgement about the student's competence based on the evidence and the relevant unit(s) of competency.
- **Step 5: Provide feedback on the assessment.** The assessor must provide advice to the learner about the outcomes of the assessment process. This includes providing the student with:
- Clear and constructive feedback on the assessment decision;
  - Information on ways of overcoming any identified gaps in competency revealed by the assessment;
  - The opportunity to discuss the assessment process and outcome; and
  - Information on reassessment and the appeals process if applicable.
- **Step 6: Record and report the result.** The assessor must:
- Record the assessment outcome according to the policies and procedures of Hallmark Institute;
  - Maintain records of the assessment procedure, evidence collected and the outcome according to the policies and procedures of Hallmark Institute;
  - Maintain the confidentiality of the assessment outcome; and
  - Organise the issuance of appropriate certification according to the policies and procedures of Hallmark.
- **Step 7: Review the assessment process.** On completion of the assessment process, the assessor must:
- Review the assessment process;
  - Report on the positive and negative features of the assessment to those responsible for the assessment procedures; and

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- If necessary, suggest to Hallmark Institute's Academic Manager ways of improving the assessment procedures through raising a *Continuous Improvement Report* or by providing input to the next scheduled assessment validation.
- **Step 8: Participate in the reassessment and appeals process.** The assessor must:
- Provide feedback and counselling to the student, if required, regarding the assessment outcome or process, including guidance on further options;
  - Provide the student with information on the reassessment and appeals process;
  - Report any assessment decision that is disputed by the student to appropriate Hallmark Institute personnel; and
  - Participate in the reassessment or appeal according to the policies and procedures of Hallmark Institute.

## Assessment Process

