Validation Procedures

Document Owner	Chief Executive Officer		
Responsible Officer	Director of Studies – Operations and Compliance Manager		
Last Update	31/06/2024		
Next Review Date	30/06/2026		
Related Documents	*Assessment System policies and procedures* *Validation Policy* *Feedback Policy* *National Code 2018* *Legislative and Regulatory Compliance*		
Version	**Authorised by**	**Approved**	**Effective Date**
2.0	Chief Executive Officer	Fabio Mejia	July 1 2024

1. Pre-Assessment Validation Process

All units of competency will undergo an initial pre assessment validation within the first 12 months of their inclusion on the scope of registration and prior to implementation. This ensures that new units are validated against the Principes of Assessment and Rules of Evidence prior to being used with students.

1. The lead validator will allocate the Unit of Competency, Assessment Tools and timeframes to the assigned Validator/Stakeholder for completion of the Pre-Validation. This will align with the Validation Plan schedule
2. All relevant documents (such as assessment instruments, mapping documents, assessor guides, learner guides, and other relevant documentation) can be accessed from the relevant SharePoint folder as outlined in the Validation Plan
3. Validator will complete Pre-Assessment Validation Checklist and Report following the process below:

2. Conducting Pre-Assessment Validation

Ensure the assessment tools meet the principles of assessment (fairness, flexibility, validity, and reliability) and the rules of evidence (validity, sufficiency, authenticity, and currency).

2.1. Q1: REVIEW MAPPING DOCUMENTS

Ensure the assessment tools are mapped correctly allowing for meeting of the Principle of Validity

Process

- Begin by thoroughly reviewing the mapping documents to ensure each assessment task is linked to the specific units of competency, performance criteria, knowledge evidence, and performance evidence.
- Do this by familiarising yourself with the layout and format of the mapping documents provided within your RTO. These documents should clearly link assessment tasks to specific elements of the unit of competency, including:
    - Units of Competency

- Performance Criteria
- Knowledge Evidence
- Performance Evidence
- Assessment Conditions
- Dimensions of Competency

- Verify that every required aspect of the unit of competency is covered by an assessment task. This involves ensuring that all elements, performance criteria, required skills, and required knowledge areas are addressed.
- Each mapping should clearly indicate where in the assessment tools (e.g., questions, projects, practical tasks) these criteria are evaluated.
- Carefully assess whether the mapping accurately reflects the assessment tasks. Ensure that the links are not only present but are correct and direct. For instance, if a performance criterion requires demonstrating a specific skill, the corresponding assessment task should directly evaluate that skill.
- Look for any gaps or mismatches where the assessment tasks do not fully or accurately cover the competencies stated.
- Consider whether the assessment tasks mapped are sufficient to comprehensively assess the knowledge and skills required. This includes reviewing the complexity and depth of questions and tasks to ensure they are at the appropriate level for the qualification and the competency standards.
- For practical skills, check that the mapping document aligns with realistic and industry-standard scenarios that the candidate would encounter in the workplace.
- Ensure that any changes or updates required to the mapping documents are thoroughly documented in Q1 of the Pre-Assessment Validation Checklist with clear reasons for adjustments and the date of modification. This documentation is critical for understanding exactly what needs to be updated/changed It should be clear so that any trainer/assessor rectifying the tool understands what needs to change. *For example: KQ1 is mapped to BSBCMM211 KQ Part Q Q2 but should be mapped to BSBCMM211KQ Part Q Q4*

2.2. Q2: VALIDATING KNOWLEDGE QUESTION ASSESSMENTS

Identify any issues of ambiguity or incorrect mapping in knowledge assessments to ensure accuracy and relevance in evaluating learners' comprehension and application of knowledge.

Process

- Each question should be scrutinised for clarity, ensuring that the language is straightforward and unambiguous.
- Avoid using technical jargon and check for excessive use of jargon unless it is essential and commonly understood in the field. This minimises the chances of misinterpretation.
- Questions must be directly relevant to the unit's learning outcomes. This ensures that each question contributes effectively to gauging the required competencies.
- Evaluate whether the questions are probing the depth of understanding needed for the competency level. For instance, higher qualification levels should involve more analysis and evaluation, rather than mere recall of facts this includes listing questions, easy multiple choice and short answer responses that could be copied and pasted from open book sources

- Confirm that each question directly aligns with specific elements and performance criteria within the unit of competency. This ensures that all required aspects of the competency are being assessed.
- Check for comprehensive coverage in the mapping to ensure no part of the competency is left unassessed. This might involve cross-referencing with the competency standards to confirm every required area is covered.
- Check that there is sufficient space and judgement tools such as feedback sections/ overall assessor records so assessors can provide feedback to candidates and clear guidance
- Where possible, check or recommend that pilot testing of new or significantly revised questions has occurred with a small group of students before full implementation. This testing can reveal unexpected interpretations or difficulties that were not anticipated during the design phase.

2.3. Q3: VALIDATING ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSEWORK

Ensure that all assignments and coursework accurately reflect the unit requirements and are capable of assessing the competencies they intend to measure.

Process

- Each assignment should be closely reviewed to ensure it aligns perfectly with the intended learning outcomes of the unit. This means that the tasks within the assignments should directly assess the skills and knowledge that the learning outcomes describe.
- Ensure that the performance evidence and assessment conditions under which the assignments are to be completed (e.g., resources, time limits, access to equipment, simulated or not simulated allowed, recording allowed, amount of personnel required, quantity of work required) reflect the real-world conditions under which the skills and knowledge would be applied. This helps maintain the validity and relevance of the assessment.
- Check that the assignment criteria are clear and integrated within the task instructions, enabling learners to understand exactly what is expected of them to demonstrate their competency.
- Assess whether the assignments are structured in a way that learners can provide sufficient evidence of their competency across all aspects of the unit's requirements. This includes a mix of practical, theoretical, and reflective components, as applicable.
- Confirm that the assignments require learners to produce evidence that is authentic (i.e., their own work) and current (i.e., reflects contemporary practices and knowledge in the field).
- Ensure that different types of evidence are solicited through various forms of assignments, such as written reports, practical demonstrations, and oral presentations, to cater to different learning styles and competency areas.
- Ensure that assignments maintain a consistent level of difficulty and scope across all units of a similar level. This consistency is important for fairness and to maintain the integrity of the qualification.
- Implement a fair and standard feedback guide clearly communicates assessment results/outcomes and next steps and is applied consistently. This helps in maintaining transparency and fairness in the assessment process.

2.4. Q4: VALIDATING RPL (RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING) KITS

Ensure RPL kits are current, clear, and effectively assess the required competencies.

Process

- Verify that the RPL kits are up to date with the training package requirements and are clear and understandable for the users.
- Assess whether the RPL process adequately measures all required competencies and knowledge against the standards.
- Ensure the kits allow for sufficient evidence collection that demonstrates currency, authenticity, and sufficiency.
- Check that the questions being asked of the students in Part A Performance are clear, are not ambiguous or open to interpretation and that examples have been provided for all Part A questions
- Check that evidence suggestions cover a broad range of types including the different types of words used for the same things in VET – for example, Session Plan/Lesson Plan or Assessment Kit/Assessment Task
- Check that Part B Third Party Reports contain questions that allow the Third Party Signatory to provide examples of real situations they have observed the student in and check these questions align with a situation directly relevant to the unit of competency criteria the TPR question has been mapped to
- Check the TPR includes clear instructions for how the Third Party should complete the Report (including that Fortress will conduct verification checks upon submission)

2.5. Q5: VALIDATING ASSESSOR GUIDES/ASSESSMENT BENCHMARKS AND CANDIDATE INSTRUCTIONS

Verify that the guides and instructions provide clear, accurate, and sufficient information for both assessors and candidates.

Process

Assessment Benchmarking

- Check that assessment benchmarks within assessment tasks or as separate documents are clear and measurable benchmarks that align with learning outcomes, industry standards and the unit of competency criteria. This ensures that all validators and assessors using the tool have a common understanding of what constitutes competent performance.
- Make sure that these benchmarks are easily accessible within the assessor guides and candidate instructions. This could involve using clear headings, bullet-point lists, and visual aids like charts or graphs to highlight key points.
- Make sure benchmarks can be understood by assessors and students. They should not be direct copy and paste from the unit criteria but rather explained in real language not technical jargon. For example: This is not a sufficient benchmark: Identify and assess safety constraints and risks to training in line with work health and safety (WHS) policies and procedures. This is a sufficient benchmark: Identified and assessed risks to students and self before, during and after training in accordance with their own workplaces WHS policy and process

Observation Reports and Checklists

- Make sure observation reports and checklists cover all necessary criteria for assessing performance. This includes task completion, quality of work, adherence to safety protocols, and application of theoretical knowledge (where it can be included in the performance)
- Check that each item in checklists and reports is specific, stating exactly what evidence is needed to demonstrate competence. For example, rather than simply stating "follows safety procedures," specify which procedures need to be followed and what successful adherence looks like. Check if examples have been provided to guide third party/workplace observers
- Check that the checklist is user-friendly. They should be logically organised and straightforward to use, which can help assessors make accurate and consistent judgments.

Instruction Clarity

- Assessor guides should provide step-by-step instructions on conducting the assessment, including how to fill out observation reports and checklists, how to interpret candidate actions and outputs, and how to handle ambiguous situations.
- Instructions for candidates should clearly state what is expected of them during the assessment. This should include what tasks they will perform, the criteria against which they will be evaluated, and any rules or procedures they need to follow.

2.6. Q6: Validating Processes and Policies

Confirm that the assessment processes and policies promote fairness and adhere to both regulatory requirements and RTO standards.

Process

- Review Reasonable Adjustment polices, Student handbook and Learner Portal to ensure they accommodate diverse candidate needs, including provisions for candidates with disabilities and those from various cultural backgrounds and also allow for reasonable adjustments to be applied (meeting the principle of Fairness and access and equity principles)
- Review Assessment Marking Processes to ensure instructions are clear to assessors:
- Review Student handbook, Learner Portal and Complaints and Appeals Policy to ensure that students can easily appeal assessment decisions made

2.7. Q7: ANALYSING STYLE GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION

Grammar

- Ensure that the text is grammatically correct to prevent misunderstandings and to maintain the professional quality of the materials.
- What to Check
- Make sure subjects and verbs agree in number (singular or plural).
- Verify that the tense remains consistent throughout the document unless changes are necessary for the meaning.
- Check for the correct application of definite (the) and indefinite (a, an) articles.
- Ensure that sentences are complete and not fragmented, avoiding overly complex or double barrelled, run-on sentences.

Punctuation
Proper punctuation clarifies meaning and aids in the readability and understanding of the text.

What to Check

- Ensure commas are used correctly to separate elements in a list, after introductory elements, and to set off nonessential clauses.
- Check for proper sentence termination. Full stops
- Verify correct use for possessives and contractions using apostrophes
- Ensure colons are used to introduce a list or explanation and that semicolons link closely related ideas.

Tone
The tone should be appropriate for the context of the material, usually professional but avoiding jargon and should resonate well with the intended audience, fostering an environment conducive to learning and assessment.

What to Check

- Ensure the tone is suitably formal, avoiding slang and overly casual language.
- The tone should be consistent throughout the document, not shifting unexpectedly between formal and informal.
- Language should be respectful and inclusive, avoiding any bias, jargon, or terminology that could be considered exclusive or offensive.

Style
The style should align with the RTO Style Guide It should promote clarity and coherence to facilitate effective communication.

What to Check

- Language should be clear and precise, with technical terms adequately explained.
- Avoid verbosity. Sentences should be concise and to the point.
- Writing should maintain an objective and neutral perspective, especially in scientific or technical disciplines.
- Adhere to any specific style guides recommended by the institution, such as APA, MLA, or Chicago, particularly in how sources are cited and referenced. For example, if using AI students must include transcripts of work. All responses are then collected in the Pre-Assessment Validation (Responses) Spreadsheet
- All recommendations are then populated in the Final Validation Findings within the PRE-Assessment Validation Checklist and Report
- Upon completion of the pre assessment validation and no further rectification is required, the Lead Validator then uploads the completed and rectified to the Validation Rectification Documents Folder - ensure that a subfolder with the UNIT CODE - DATE -INITIALS is created each time maintain the version control.

3. **Assessment Moderation Process**

3.1. Quarterly Moderation Meetings

Regular meetings held every quarter to review a selection of assessment tasks and student evidence.

3.2. End-Of-Term Moderation

Comprehensive review of assessment tasks and outcomes at the end of each term.

3.3. Ad-hoc Moderation

Additional moderation sessions triggered by specific needs, such as new assessment tools, significant changes in curriculum, or feedback from stakeholders.

4. **Moderation Process**

- Select a representative sample of assessment tasks and student evidence for moderation from ACBI Learning management System . This selection includes a mix of high, medium, and low-performing students to ensure a comprehensive review.
- Distribute assessment tasks, student evidence, and relevant documentation to all participants ahead of the moderation meeting.
- Convene assessors to discuss and review the selected assessment tasks and student evidence.
- Assessors compare and discuss their assessment decisions to ensure alignment and consistency.
- Identify any discrepancies in assessment judgments and work collaboratively to resolve them.
- Document the outcomes of the moderation session, including any identified issues, discrepancies, and areas for improvement. Complete the Moderation Record to record outcomes of the moderation activity
- Provide feedback to individual assessors and develop recommendations for improving assessment practices.
- Develop an action plan to address the recommendations and implement changes to assessment tools and practices as needed. This must be added to the ACBI Continuous Improvement Register and actioned within 30 days of findings
- Monitor the implementation of changes and review their effectiveness in subsequent moderation sessions.

5. **Post Assessment Validation Process**

Post Assessment Validation occurs after assessment

Validation activities, as a quality review process described in the Standards, are generally conducted after assessment is complete. This is so that you can consider the validity of both assessment practices and assessment judgements, to identify future improvements to the assessment tool, process and outcomes.

Post Assessment Validation processes and activities include:

- gathering sufficient sample of completed assessment tools
- testing how the tools and the systems in place, including assessment instructions and resources, impact the assessment findings
- check whether assessments were conducted as intended
- check whether the outcomes reflect students are fully competent.

Post-assessment validation is essential in maintaining the integrity and quality of educational assessments. By systematically reviewing a sample of completed student assessments, validators can ensure compliance with the principles of assessment—validity, reliability, flexibility, and fairness—and the rules of evidence—validity, sufficiency, authenticity, and currency.

6. Organisational Processes

Specific reference to: Assessment Systems and Related Processes:

- **Conducting Assessment Policy** - How does assessment meet the principles of assessment and rules of evidence
- Assessment Marking Policy
- RPL Assessment Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- LLN Policy
- AQF Issuance Policy
- Assessment Plagiarism Policy
- Learning Resource Policy and process
- Continuous Improvement Policy

7. Post Assessment Validation Specific Processes and Policies

- Assessment Validation Policy
- 5-year Validation Plan
- Statistical Sampling Policy/process
- Post- Assessment Validation Procedure
- Post-Assessment Validation Checklist – per student in sample

8. Post-Assessment Validation Procedure

- The Lead Validator will schedule the meeting/assign the validation to the designated validator according to the **ACBI Validation Plan.**
- The Lead Validator establishes the sample size and determines the student assessments to be validated.
- Valid Sampling Approach for Validations
  - To determine the sample size, use the ASQA 'Validation sample size calculator' . The lead validator will determine the number of completed assessments to be validated. Refer to https://www.asqa.gov.au/resources/tools/validation-sample-size-calculator
  - Using the 'valid sampling approach', Trainers and Assessors will randomly pick students to undertake the validation. This can be done using the suggested approach found on ASQA's website.

  - *"Produce an alphabetical listing, sorted by surname, of all of the learners who submitted work within the training product being validated. From this list, highlight the fifth surname and then every third name thereafter. Go back to the beginning of the list, if necessary, to identify a sufficient sample size"*
  - The Lead Validator will record the sample size and the student names in the downloaded excel spreadsheet generated for the validation. This will include all student names that have completed the unit within the past 6 months.
- The Lead Validator will allocate assessments to be validated by individual team members. This will include access to all relevant documentation (such as completed assessments, mapping documents, assessor guides, and learner guides)
- Validators will access all completed student assessments from the ACBI's Learning management system.
- The allocated Validator accesses the Process for Validating against the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence and then completes the Post-Assessment Validation Checklist and Report for each student to be validated. *For example, if the sample size is for 30 completed student samples, the validator must complete 30 Post Assessment Validation Checklists*
- All recommendations are then populated in the *Final Validation Findings* within the Post-Assessment Validation Checklist and Report
- The Lead Validator analyses the Final Validation Findings and based on the recommendations Lead Validator will determine:
  - **AGREED - Assessor Training needed** - means the assessment decision did not lead to critical non-compliance but assessor training is needed for continuous/professional improvement
  - **AGREED - Rectifications needed** - means the assessment decision made for this student has led to critical non-compliance and action needs to be taken to address the non-compliance. For example: the student will be required to be re-assessed.
  - **NOT REQUIRED** - means assessment decisions made were correct and no action is needed
  - **REVISIT** - means the documented validation outcomes are unclear and the validator needs to reclarify and update the specific questions to include more clear or succinct information (they will do this by completing the Form again)
- Within the 30-calendar day window for rectification, the Lead Validator then assigns assessor training/rectifications to the appropriate personnel (such as other trainers/industry experts and/or training manager/CEO)
- Where a post-assessment validation has determined that critical non-compliance has occurred, the Lead Validator informs ACBI Training Manager/Compliance Manager and CEO who will then document a specific rectification plan (this is not a process as each rectification plan will differ) This rectification plan is documented in the ACBI Continuous Improvement Register with an expected date for completion
- The assigned rectifier (TM/CEO) will then advise the Lead Validator that rectifications have been completed
- Upon completion of Assessor training AND/OR rectifications, the Lead Validator then updates the CI Register and actions the validation rectification as complete with the date completed.

- They then update the Validation Plan and assign re-validation as per Steps 1-10.
- Once ALL rectifications are complete, the Lead Validator then records the outcome of the validation in the Validation Plan as complete.

9. Post Assessment Validation – Validating against Principles of Assessment

Validity

Ask yourself?

- Was the assessment decision made justified and based on the evidence of performance or the true and authentic understanding of the individual learner.
- Do the student responses align with model answers (where appropriate) and if not, does the student answer the question correctly in their own words and has the assessor marked this correctly?
- Did the assessment decisions made ensure sufficient measuring of specific skills and knowledge?
- Do the final assessment outcomes/decisions meet the requirements of the unit of competency criteria they are assessing?
- Do the final assessment outcomes/decisions demonstrate that the student could apply their knowledge and/or skills in a range of situations and other similar situations?

Reliability

Ask yourself?

- Are assessment decisions made for different students by different assessors consistent and comparable? For example, if looking at a sample of 10 sets of the same Knowledge Question test/Assignment, did assessors mark the same questions as SAT/NYS based on the same student responses?
- If assessment decisions made are not consistent and not comparable, is this due to assessor knowledge or lack thereof/assessment benchmark lack of clarity or question ambiguity?

Flexibility

Ask yourself?

- Did the assessor allow for reasonable adjustments such as extended time, different formats (verbal, written, practical), and consider cultural or linguistic backgrounds?
- If yes, has this been documented in contact notes or within the assessment task?
- Does the overall assessment decision made demonstrate that the RTO drew from a range of assessment methods and used those that are appropriate to the context, the unit of competency and associated assessment requirements, and the individual?

Fairness

Ask yourself?

- Are assessment decisions made free from bias and discrimination. Check feedback provided to students, was this fair and impartial?

- Is the quality, tone and quantity of feedback from assessors consistent across multiple different students?
- Did all students validated within the sample have equitable access to resources and opportunities to demonstrate their abilities. For example, if delivering training to overseas students in different time zones, are they able to access trainer support when needed?
- For any resubmits, was the feedback provided clear and did the assessor make varied attempts at communication – such as written and verbal communication to ensure student clearly understood next steps?
- Was the student informed of their right to appeal/right to challenge an assessment decision made in any of the validated samples? And if so, did the assessor follow the RTO process for this?

10. Post Assessment Validation – Validating against Rules of Evidence

Validity

Ask yourself?

- Does the evidence collected from assessments directly relate to the question being asked/competency being assessed?
- Can you as the validator be assured that the learner has the skills, knowledge and attributes as described in the module or unit of competency and associated assessment requirements?

Sufficiency

Ask yourself?

- Was enough evidence collected to make a comprehensive judgment about a student's competency.
- Was collected evidence (answers, projects, presentations) ample enough to demonstrate consistent performance across all criteria.
- Was the collected evidence of sufficient quality to determine a satisfactory result. For example, if the assessment asked for an Assessment Tool to be developed for an AQF 3 level Unit, did the tool meet all requirements of the chosen unit?
- If the unit of competency specifies a quantity of assessment such as amount of learners/ amount of presentations/ duration of delivery, does the final assessment meet these conditions?
- Was the evidence collected relevant to the unit of competency criteria. For example, if the student was asked to provide 3 x session plans, did they provide3 x session plans that were robust in regard to session plan requirements?
- Did assessment decisions made allow for a suitable deeming of competence. Did the assessor over assess or under assess the student?

Authenticity

Ask yourself?

- Was the work submitted by students their own? Check for use of AI without paraphrasing, evidence submitted that could be created on word documents and does not allow for authentic judgements/ Third Party Reports/observation Checklists completed with no comments/ no detail and that have not been verified
- Are there signs of plagiarism or use of non-original work.
- Were any assessments sampled checked for authenticity confirmation by methods such as oral questioning or use of plagiarism detection software/ If yes, was this done sufficiently?

Currency

Ask yourself?

- Is evidence submitted by the student from the past or very recent past (limit of 3 yrs.)?
- Do the assessment decisions show that the student's knowledge and skills are up-to-date and relevant at the time of assessment?
- Do the completed assessment tasks and the student's responses reflect current industry standards and practices?

USEFUL RESOURCES

Here is a list of useful resources to guide you in validation practice

- ASQA spotlight on validation series
- Clauses 1.8 to 1.12—Conduct effective assessment
- Clause 1.25 - Independent validation of training and assessment qualifications
- Conducting Validation Factsheet

Document History:

Version	Date	Author	Reason	Sections
1.0	25/10/2018	Lee Buckley	Original policy created	All
2.0	31/06/2024	Deirdre D'Souza	Updated to provide further clarity.	All