Flexible Learning Strategies & Assessment Procedures

Flexible learning and assessment procedures form part of our learning and assessment strategies and are integral to the concept of competency-based training. We customise our training and assessments to meet your specific needs.

If you are having difficulty achieving competency in any module please discuss the matter with your Trainer/Assessor and where possible alternative learning/assessment strategies will be provided to you.

Competency Based Training

You are participating in a course of competency-based training. Qualifications are made up of Units of Competency. These tell us the skills and knowledge recognised as necessary to perform effectively in a particular job or role. Each industry area divides these skills and knowledge into related categories that form National Competency Standards for specific industry areas.

A competency is: "The ability to perform a job to the required level of performance expected in the workplace."

Assessment

Assessment is the means by which we determine whether or not a competency has been achieved. It is the process of collecting evidence and making judgements about the extent to which a person demonstrates the knowledge and skills as set out in the standards or learning outcomes of a unit of competency. For an effective assessment system in a competency environment, some basic principles must apply.

Underlying principles of assessment:

(a)   Validity

The assessments effectively asses the units of competency

Validity of assessment is when:

- Trainers/Assessors are fully aware of what is to be assessed, as indicated by the standards of competence, including clearly defined performance criteria
- Appropriate evidence is collected from activities that can be clearly related to the units of competency.

(b)   Authenticity

The evidence collected is authentic that is, actually comes from valid sources and is directly attributable to the skills and knowledge of the individual being assessed.

(c)   Reliability

Reliable assessment uses methods and procedures that 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 Trainers/Assessors across industries and a hierarchy of assessment which ensures a quality outcome

- Assessment is carried out within a system flexible enough to cope with multiple and diverse forms of evidence.

(d)   Consistency

The assessment system must ensure that evidence collected and provided for judgement is consistent across the range, without undue reliance on any small number of select workplace contexts or projects.

(e)   Currency

Under an effective system, assessment evaluates whether or not the individual's skills and knowledge are current and can be applied in today's workplace. As a general rule, competencies that have not been demonstrated within the past 3 years are not usually accepted as "current". However, an assessor, under some circumstances may make exceptions to the specified period.

There may be specific situations where skills have not been directly applied for a longer period, but these skills are in fact still current for the individual. In cases such as this, evidence from earlier periods may be admissible, and assessed for currency, within an appropriately flexible assessment system.

(f)   Sufficiency

Evidence of competency should be sufficient to cover all the elements, performance criteria and required range of variables in the standards against which assessment is to be carried out.

A tendency of many candidates is to provide more (or less) evidence than is actually required to prove competency against the standards. An effective assessment system ensures that candidates are clearly advised regarding the amount and form of evidence, which is sufficient to prove competency. This should avoid the situation where masses of evidence are provided, requiring Trainers/Assessors to spend more time than necessary per candidate, or too little evidence, making it difficult to judge competence.

(g)   Flexibility

Every portfolio or set of student evidence is unique. Each student will identify and develop his or her own specific set of evidence to prove competency against the standards. This set will be based on the workplace experience of the student and will comprise diverse types and forms of relevant and appropriate evidence.

Trainers/Assessors will take a flexible approach to the assessment of evidence. Clearly, this approach must always take time and cost into account both to ensure the best use of Trainers/Assessors time and the best use of the candidate and his or her employer's time.

An assessment system must evaluate the scope of knowledge and skills covered by the criteria both performance (skill) and underpinning knowledge and understanding.

Trainers/Assessors
The role of a Trainer/Assessor is to objectively assess and judge a candidate's evidence against a set of standards. In order to do this effectively, an Trainer/Assessor must have a sound knowledge of, and be skilled in, the relevant industry area. In addition, the Trainer/Assessor must have acknowledged competency in assessment itself and hold an appropriate Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training or Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. A

Trainer/Assessor must:

- Interpret and understand the criteria
- Ensure that evidence meets the standards
- Ensure that evidence is valid, authentic, reliable, consistent, current and sufficient
- Use expertise to make fair and objective judgements.

Lennox Institute has a recruitment policy that ensures our staff are suitably qualified and experienced to support the delivery and assessment of students.

Forms of Evidence

In general, basic forms of skills evidence include:

(a)   Direct performance evidence

- current or from an acceptable past period
- extracted examples within the workplace
- natural observation in the workplace
- simulations, including competency and skills tests, projects, assignments

(b)   Supplementary evidence, from:

- oral and written questioning
- personal reports
- witness testimony.

Appropriate and valid forms of assessment utilised for both skills and knowledge may include:

- evaluation of direct products of work
- natural observation
- skill tests, simulations and projects
- evaluation of underpinning knowledge and understanding
- questioning and discussion
- evidence from prior activity.

Assessments are not a stressful activity. They are conducted in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Do not regard your assessment as an examination. Your Trainer/Assessor needs to know which competencies from your course you have mastered, and which competencies require further practice and will be flexible in the assessment method used. It is in your interest to ensure that all of the skills necessary for the job have been mastered; our aim is to help you to learn and master those skills and put them into practice.