

PRINCIPLES OF
ON-JOB
ASSESSMENT
FOR INDUSTRY
TRAINING



**PRACTICE
EXAMPLE
1**

Each ITO is challenged to develop its assessment processes and practices to best meet the needs and demands of the specific industry, workplace and trainee involved. The ITO works with these parties to ensure everyone understands what is expected for trainees to undertake and complete their qualifications. Below is an example of how this is working in practice.

THE BCITO AND BUILDING APPRENTICES: EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS

The BCITO sees the assessment process as part of the partnership between the trainee, the training adviser (TA), who carries out the assessment, the employer, who evaluates, and the BCITO moderator. This team approach is exemplified by the actions taken around assessment visits. M, the TA, talks about his approach to site visits:

**Collaboration
and
partnership**

“I call the employer a week in advance of the visit to see how the trainee is going. You’ve really got to listen to the employer’s tone. They are generally happy to have us out

unless there are good reasons – for example a concrete pour. ... Employers generally want the best for the trainees. On visits after talking to trainees I’ll talk to the employer, along the lines of, ‘the recall of theory was good today’ and this then leads to positive conversations about how the trainee is progressing on the job.”

While communication happens at this personal level, it also occurs through written documents. It begins with the information trainees get at induction evenings, which are followed by initial visits from the TA. *“The first visit is important to make people feel comfortable and outline roles and expectations,”* says E the TA. The Training Plan is an integral part of the communication process. It is a living document used for goal-setting and charts the trainees’ progress. Both trainees and employers appreciate this approach. *“It’s a lot more streamlined than it previously was. I like the idea of the goal-setting and that this breaks down what needs to be known,”* says Matt the employer. Work drives the goal-setting in so far as it creates the ‘where-to-next’ for the apprentice. Often this will be done in conjunction with the employer, who may want the apprentice to know something for a particular job, or to access learning about a particular facet of the job.

**Communication
with trainees and
employers**

During site visits, trainees have opportunities to show and talk about what they have done, along with supplying digital evidence. On the surface, the process looks like a conversation, but it is carefully crafted around deliberate acts of questioning. E, the TA, explains his approach:





“I have a conversation, get them to talk about what they are doing. The conversation is guided by the requirements of the unit standards and I use these as prompts. I also look at evidence - photos, work diary, site plans. I have a good open relationship that is built on trust, so assessment is not a tortuous thing. I use an integrated approach in the assessment conversation – so it’s about what they can do and know how to do. If it is practical, they need to know the theory behind it. They need to explain the theory and why they do what they do, especially in the third and fourth year.”

Naturally occurring evidence

The trainees’ evidence comes from showing and discussing what they know and can do. During the site walkaround, R the apprentice, with prompts from the TA, showed and talked about what he’d done for the bathroom renovation. *“Took down the old walls, doors and gib. ... Cut the dwangs and lined the new walls. ... Chucked the concrete in. Did two bulkheads. Matt [employer] started the first one to show me.”* Having to show real evidence is a process that meaningfully involves the trainee and has them actively thinking about what they are going to provide for assessment and for work. The apprentice likes the idea of gathering evidence through photos as he goes along: *“It’s handy as you forget over three months what you’ve done”*. He also sees it as an opportunity to highlight the work he is proud of, saying, *“See this crafty little thing I did. It took me a while to figure it out.”* He also makes use of his

work diary. It has a dual purpose, being used for assessment, where he matches the information to specific modules, and for referring to when he is filling out his time sheet. Another apprentice, J, finds the whole process manageable. *“I can sit and read [theory booklets], keep a diary and take pictures. The process is helpful. The questions are a good test of my knowledge – it’s helping me learn.”*

Professionally developed and supported assessors

These assessment conversations capture the learning and practising process and how progress is made. The apprentices talked about: being helped or shown; helping the employer do something; how using new tools was a little difficult and hoping to get better with them.

Being able to make judgments about evidence presented in this way requires assessors to have the appropriate knowledge and skills, which means ITOs have to provide sufficient systems and support to enable it. The TAs are responsible for making decisions. They are supported in a ‘community of practice’ type model in which they share practice and advice. They are also supported by the fact that they work in teams and have moderators who, on occasions, ride along with them on assessment visits, acting as both moderators and mentors.



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