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The principles of on-job assessment for ITOs

The workplace provides an authentic context for learning and as such provides a genuine context for assessing the progress, skills, knowledge and competencies of trainees. It provides opportunities for on-job assessment that are fair, valid, feasible to undertake and not overly onerous for trainees, employers or Industry Training Organisations (ITOs). On-job assessment provides opportunities for trainees to demonstrate and/or gather evidence about what they have done and then present this in a way that attests to their ongoing learning, progress and competence.

There is no single model for 'on-job' assessment. Rather ITOs adapt a principles-based approach to suit the needs of their trainees, employers and industries. These principles highlight the need for those in the assessment process to know what is happening, what is required of them, and how to do it.

PRINCIPLE 1

ITOs and workplaces have a clear purpose for assessment and work together

Central to this principle is the notion of partnership that is driven by the needs of the trainee, the industry and the workplace. Assessment requirements must be made clear to ensure everyone involved understands what is expected for trainees to undertake and complete their qualifications. Communication underpins this principle and leads to a clear understanding about the 'why', 'what', 'where', 'when' and 'how' of assessment and the roles and responsibilities of each of the partners. Communication happens via websites, documentation (e.g. training plans/agreements, theory, assessment guides), and ongoing conversations.

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How do we operate a partnership approach with industry, employers and trainees?

How do our training agreements/plans inform and support the assessment process?

What evidence do we have that our qualifications and assessment processes suit industry, employers and trainees?

How, when and what do we communicate with industry, employers and trainees?

What evidence do we have that shows our partnership approach and communications are effective?

PRINCIPLE 2

ITOs' assessment structures and systems support learning, skill acquisition and qualification completion

This is the key principle as the structures and systems have to support and enable trainees to learn, acquire skills and knowledge and subsequently complete their qualifications. There is no single way to go about this, as ITOs have models and approaches that have been adapted to suit the industries and workplaces in which their trainees operate.

The assessment process, in addition to being fair, valid and reliable, needs to guide rather than drive learning in a way that engages trainees with workplace activities and allows them to demonstrate and/or collect and collate evidence of competence in authentic ways. Assessment structures and systems should allow for an integrated rather than atomised approach to learning so the focus is on demonstration of holistic and integrated learning rather than individual unit standards and evidence requirements.

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In what ways do we support trainees and employers to show and/or collect evidence required for assessment and to verify and evaluate that evidence?

What could we be doing with our assessment approaches to improve qualification completion rates?

What evidence do we have that shows that our assessment approaches are effective?





Good assessment requires appropriately recruited, trained and professionally developed people

Assessment for qualifications is high-stakes so the process must be robust and judgements reliable. The people performing the varying assessment roles need to have the requisite subject matter expertise and assessment knowledge and skills.

Assessment and verification happens in a variety of ways across and within ITOs. Some ITOs employ Training Advisors as assessors, others use contracted assessors, while others use workplace assessors. And some ITOs use a mix of all three approaches. What all the ITOs have in common is people in the workplace who verify/attest/evaluate the competence of the trainees. These are vital roles and support the ideal that on-job assessment is part of a continual learning process rather than a one-off event.

All those involved with the on-job assessment process need to be trained to fulfil their assessment roles and have ongoing opportunities to upskill. This can be through professional learning opportunities and other mechanisms that provide opportunities for professional conversations.



What assessment knowledge do assessors and verifiers need in order to make reliable judgments and how does our ITO equip them with this?

What sort of ongoing professional development opportunities does our ITO provide assessors and others involved with the assessment process?

What evidence do we have that shows our professional learning opportunities are effective in upskilling those involved with assessment?



Moderation contributes to the validity and reliability of assessment decisions

Moderation is an integral part of the assessment process. It is required because assessment responses involve interpretation and judgement. Moderation helps ITOs ensure assessment materials are fit-for-purpose and appropriate and that assessment judgements are fair, reliable and accurate. It also helps to ensure that the assessments cover what is required by the qualifications and can help identify areas for improvement.

Moderation supports assessors to make the best possible professional judgements. The pre-moderation process ensures the assessment activities are fit-for purpose and validly and reliably assess the requirements of the qualifications. Post-moderation checks the accuracy of assessment decisions, the quality of the assessments and the degree to which trainees are meeting the requirements. Both pre- and post-moderation involve a range of people and provide opportunity for conversations that engage and develop instructional designers, quality assurers and assessors.



What sort of moderation conversations does our ITO have and who is involved with these?

What evidence do we have that our pre-moderation processes are as effective as they can be?

Assessment for qualifications is a technical process that needs to be robust and quality assured. However, on-job assessment is a collaborative process whereby ITOs guide and support all those involved with the process – trainees, employers and their own staff so that:

- the assessment process is manageable and fair
- the assessment activities are authentic and valid
- the assessment activities and moderation processes produce reliable results.



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