



Assessment Policy

Context

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching system and an important aspect of maintaining academic standards. It measures the achievement of competency and formally certifies student achievements for external audiences.

Assessment at Westminster College is linked to specific competency and based on clearly articulated criteria that help students understand the characteristics of high-quality work. It supports student-centred approaches to learning. In keeping with Westminster College's strongly applied focus to teaching and learning, each trainer/assessor endorses relevant diverse forms of assessment primarily drawing on real life practice.

Westminster College has an established set of principles that guide learning and teaching within the organisation.

Definitions

Assessment: the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard or level of achievement required within a subject.

Competency: the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situation and improvements (Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 and amendments: User's Guide).

Disability: has the same meaning as in section 4(1) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), and includes physical, psychological and psychiatric conditions and injuries, and ongoing medical conditions.

Formative Assessment: helps students and staff to identify strengths, weaknesses and ways to improve and enhance student learning. It is intended to support student learning rather than determine a result.

Summative Assessment: evaluates the quality of students' learning and involves assigning a grade or numerical result based on how effectively students have addressed unit of competency requirements.

Assessment Moderation: the process of establishing comparability of standards in student performance so that judgements made of student performance are consistent. The goal of assessment moderation is to assure assessment decisions are valid, reliable, consistent and fair.

Assessment Validation: the quality review of the assessment process. It involves checking that assessment tools produce valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgements to be made as to whether the requirements of a course or training package are met. It includes the review of a statistically valid sample of the assessments and making recommendations for Westminster improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes and acting upon these recommendations.

Written Feedback: This can be a powerful tool for helping students to move forward in their learning. However, if we bombard the students with too much feedback, the students will shut down. Written feedback has the advantage that the student can refer to it repeatedly.

Scope

This policy applies to all Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses. All staff must comply with this policy whenever they are engaged in any aspect of the assessment process.



Principles of Assessment

Fairness: the individual student's needs are considered in the assessment process; where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are applied by Westminster College to take into account the individual student's needs; Westminster College informs the student about the assessment process, and provides the student with the opportunity to challenge the result of the assessment and be re-assessed if necessary.

Flexibility: assessment is flexible to the individual student by reflecting the student's needs, assessing competencies held by the student no matter how or whether they have been acquired, and drawing from a range of assessment methods and using those that are appropriate to the context, the unit of competency and associated assessment requirements, and the individual.

Reliability: evidence presented for assessment is consistently interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.

Validity: the assessment decision is justified based on the evidence of performance of the individual student. This principle requires:

- Assessment against the unit(s) of competency and the associated assessment requirements covers the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance;
- Assessment of knowledge and skills is integrated with their practical application;
- Assessment to be based on evidence that demonstrates that a student could demonstrate these skills;
- And knowledge in other similar situations; and
- Judgement of competence is based on evidence of student performance that is aligned to the unit/s of competency, and associated assessment requirements.

Assessment is designed to develop student learning (formative), to make judgements about student learning relative to stated learning outcomes (summative) and to monitor student learning as a measure of teaching effectiveness. Assessments are to be relevant to the workplace where appropriate and consultation with industry should form part of this process.

Academic leaders will provide the appropriate support and instruction to lecturers regarding the design, implementation and evaluation of assessments.

Assessment in VET courses is conducted in accordance with the Principles of Assessment and the Rules of Evidence.

Rules of Evidence

Validity: the assessor is assured that the student has the skills, knowledge and attributes as described in the module or unit of competency and associated assessment requirements.

Sufficiency: the assessor is assured that the quality, quantity and relevance of the assessment evidence enable a judgement to be made of a student's competency.

Currency: the assessor is assured that the assessment evidence demonstrates current competency. This requires assessment evidence to be from the present or the very recent past.

Authenticity: the assessor is assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the student's own work.



Assessment Validation and Assessment Moderation

Assessment validation and assessment moderation are undertaken as part of Westminster College's quality assurance and continuous improvement of teaching and learning activities. Assessment validation and assessment moderation activities are undertaken collaboratively and will involve all staff who deliver and assess the relevant subject. These activities will also be informed by the broader spectrum of external benchmarking activities.

Assessment Validation

Westminster College systematically implements ongoing validation of assessment practices and judgements in each course to evaluate quality and drive continuous improvement. In VET courses, validation involves checking that assessment practices are in accordance with the Principles of Assessment, and judgements are made in accordance with the Rules of Evidence.

Assessment Moderation

The requirement in the RTO Standards to undertake validation of assessment judgements does not prohibit Westminster College from undertaking similar activities, such as moderation, or any other process aimed at increasing the quality of assessment.

Feedback to Students

Students receive specific, timely, supportive, constructive and developmental feedback on their learning and performance. Written feedback should be provided to students on all assessment items other than multiple choice tests.

Students are entitled to see their results for all assessment items within two (2) weeks from the date that the assessment item was due.

Formative assessment does not require formal feedback from trainers, and alternative forms of providing feedback can be used, e.g. group and peer marking and self-marking from a supplied answer guide.

Return of Assessment Items

All summative assessments warrant written feedback from the trainer, the student will have the opportunity to review their result and the feedback within 2-3 weeks of the assessment item due date. Assessment items will not be returned to students for them to keep, only for review.

Submission of Assessments

Assessments submitted on time

A student who submits an assessment task on time¹ but whose work is deemed Unsatisfactory will be given two (2) further opportunities to demonstrate competency in that task.

- Following notification of the unsatisfactory outcome, a student will have a further seven (7) calendar days to resubmit;
- If the outcome is still unsatisfactory, a student will have a further two (2) calendar days to submit for the third time with a fee of \$250.00;
- Re-submissions must be made on time. If after the third submission the student's assessments still

¹ Assessment submission time is seven (7) days after the academic presentation is finalised as per the class timetable and/or as advised by the trainer.



assessed as Unsatisfactory, the outcome will stand.

A student who submits any assessment in excess of the due date (or agreed extension date) will incur a penalty of \$250.00.

Assessments Submitted Up to Seven (7) Calendar Days After the Due Date

A student who submits an assessment up to seven (7) calendar days after the due date (or agreed extension date) and whose work is deemed Unsatisfactory will be given one further opportunity to demonstrate competency in that task.

- Following notification of the unsatisfactory outcome, a student will have two (2) calendar days to resubmit; and
- Re-submissions must be made on time. If, after the second re-submission, the student's assessment is still assessed as Unsatisfactory, that outcome will stand.

Assessments submitted more than seven (7) calendar days after the due date

A student who submits an assessment more than seven (7) calendar days after the due date (or agreed extension date) and whose work is deemed Unsatisfactory will **not** be given a further opportunity to demonstrate competency in that task, unless there are exceptional or extenuating circumstances.

Unexpected, Exceptional or Extenuating Circumstances

Westminster College acknowledges that students may be academically disadvantaged when unexpected or extenuating circumstances impact on their performance or their ability to complete their assessment tasks by the specified date. In such circumstances a student may be eligible for a modified arrangement, such as:

- An assessment deadline extension;
- Re-submission or re-assessment;
- Deferred assessment; and
- Special consideration.

To be granted a modified arrangement, the student must submit the relevant form (*Application for Alternative Assessment Time*).

Unexpected or extenuating circumstances are those which were outside the control of the student and/or for which there was no opportunity to prepare in advance. Unexpected or extenuating circumstances include:

- Medical circumstances:
 - An unexpected illness, a recurrence of a chronic illness or an accident;
 - A disability or illness for which a variation has already been made will not be accepted unless the disability has been compounded by an unexpected change, or an additional condition; and/or
 - Supporting documentation must take the form of an original certificate or letter on letterhead from a registered treating medical practitioner, registered health practitioner or approved specialist, depending on the nature of the condition.
- Compassionate circumstances:
 - Hardship or trauma such as the death or serious illness of a close family member, severe disruption to domestic arrangements, being a victim of crime or an accident.
 - Supporting documentation may take the form of a letter from a designated counsellor who has prior knowledge of the student and their circumstances; an original medical certificate or letter on letterhead from a registered treating medical practitioner, registered health practitioner or approved specialist, depending on the nature of the condition; a letter from a person qualified to assess and support the application (e.g. clergy providing grief counselling); or a certificate from a funeral director or death



notice.

- Supporting documentation will not be accepted from a relative or friend of the student, or friend of the student's family.
- Special circumstances:
 - Religious observance or obligations, formal legal commitments, military service, service with a recognised emergency management service, representing Westminster College, a state or home nation at a significant sporting or cultural event or unforeseen and significant employment-related circumstances such as a move interstate at short notice.
 - Supporting documentation will not be accepted from a relative or friend of the student, or friend of the student's family.

Note: Reasonable adjustments to assessment that enable a student with a disability or ongoing medical condition to participate on the same basis as other students without a disability will be made according to the Reasonable adjustment conditions.

Assessment Deadline Extension

If a student has been affected by unexpected or extenuating circumstances and has yet to submit their assessment, they may be eligible for an extension.

- The Program Manager (or delegated nominee) decides on extension applications;
- Extensions will provide a reasonable time, given the nature of the circumstances, for the student to complete the task without giving the student an unfair advantage over other students. A reasonable time will not extend beyond ten (10) working days except in exceptional circumstances; or
- Extension applications must be submitted at least one (1) working day prior to the assessment due date, unless the evidence of unexpected or extenuating circumstances provided indicates this would not have been possible.

Re-Submission

If a student has been affected by unexpected or extenuating circumstances and has already submitted or attempted their assessment, they may be eligible for re-submission.

- The Program Manager (or delegated nominee) decides on re-submission applications; and
- Re-submission allows the student to keep working on a piece of assessment for a reasonable time, given the nature of the circumstances, without giving the student an unfair advantage over other students. A reasonable time will not extend beyond ten (10) working days from the date the student was advised in writing of approval to resubmit, except in exceptional circumstances.

Special Consideration

If a student has been affected by unexpected or extenuating circumstances and has already submitted their final assessment despite facing these circumstances, the CEO may decide to do one of the following:

- Adjust the result for the piece of work in question, considering the circumstances that affected the student and having regard to the student's overall performance within the course; or
- Make no adjustment, considering the circumstances that affected the student and having regard to the student's overall performance within the course.

Reasonable Adjustments for Students with a Disability

Reasonable adjustments to assessment that enable a student with a disability to participate at Westminster College on the same basis as other students without a disability will be made according to Reasonable Adjustment.





Other Modified Arrangements

Other alternative assessment arrangements may be approved by the CEO in exceptional circumstances.

Requesting a Re-Assessment

A student who considers that an assessment task has been unfairly or inappropriately marked may request a re-assessment. Re-assessment involves the assessment task being marked again by a second assessor, without any further work by the student.

- A re-assessment must be requested to the Trainer/Assessor in writing within five (5) working days of the original result being released. The request needs to include details of reasons the student has deemed the assessment result as unfair or inappropriate regarding published assessment criteria.
- If the Program Manager approves the request for a re-assessment, a second assessor will review the same assessment with the following conditions:
 - The second assessor is not provided with details of the student's original mark;
 - The original assessor will be asked to comment on the re-evaluated assessment;
 - The full range of outcomes which were used on the original assessment task must be available or re-assessment;
 - The original and the second results will be referred to the CEO for final determination of the result to stand, which may be higher or lower than the original result; and
 - No further re-assessment is permitted.
- If the Trainer/Assessor does not approve the request for a re-assessment, the student is provided with a written response outlining why the request was rejected.

If the request for re-assessment is not approved, the original result will stand. Students who are not satisfied with the result of their request for a re-assessment may lodge an appeal.

Grading Criteria

Outcome Notations

All assessments for courses are assessed according to the rules outlined in the relevant Training Package or accredited course. Each unit of competency is allocated a result as follows:

Outcome	Abbreviation	Description
Satisfactory	S	Awarded to a student who has demonstrated that they are proficient to the specified standard against a set of criteria being assessed.
Not Satisfactory	NS	Awarded to a student who has failed to demonstrate that they are proficient to the specified standard against a set of criteria being assessed.
Competent	C	Awarded to a student who has achieved all the elements specified for a unit of competency to the specified standard.
Not Yet Competent	NYC	Awarded to a student who has failed to achieve all the elements specified for that unit of competency to the specified standard.
Credit Transfer	CT	Relates to the credit received by a student for a unit of competency through recognition of their formal learning.
Recognition of Prior Learning	RPL	Relates to the credit received by a student for a unit of competency through recognition of their informal learning.



Appealing a Result

The College acknowledges that students have the right to appeal an assessment decision, based on valid grounds for appeal. The College has provision for students to appeal against assessment decisions. The College ensures that students have access to a fair and equitable process for lodging an appeal against an assessment decision.

Valid grounds for an appeal against an assessment decision (where the client feels the assessment decision is incorrect) could include the following:

- The judgement as to whether competency has been achieved and demonstrated was made incorrectly;
- The judgement was not made in accordance with the Assessment Plan;
- Alleged bias of the assessor;
- Alleged lack of competence of the assessor;
- Alleged wrong information from the assessor regarding the assessment process;
- Alleged inappropriate assessment process for the competency;
- Faulty or inappropriate equipment; and/or
- Inappropriate conditions.

Students wishing to appeal a grade need to meet with the Senior Trainer and Assessor/Program Manager in the first instance as outlined within the Grievance Policy VET (Refer to Grievances/Complaints/Appeals Policy).

An investigation into an appeal may result in one of the following outcomes:

- Appeal is upheld; in this event the following options will be available:
 - The original assessment will be re-assessed, potentially by another assessor;
 - Appropriate recognition will be granted; and/or
 - A new assessment shall be conducted/arranged.
 -
- Appeal is rejected/not upheld; in accordance with Westminster College's Assessment policy the client will be required to:
 - Undertake further training or experience prior to further assessment; or
 - Re-submit further evidence; or
 - Submit/undertake a new assessment.

If a student receives a result for an assessment item that they disagree with, they have the right to lodge a grievance in accordance with the College's Grievances/Complaints/Appeals Policy.