**Assessment Policy**

## 1. Assessments

In general terms assessment during training may include:

- Case studies
- Observation of competency in simulated environment
- Question and answer sessions
- Projects
- Assignments
- Presentations
- Role plays
- Written tests

Integrated assessment of some units may occur.

Advance notice of the assessment will be given to students for all forms of assessment

Survive First Aid Pty Ltd student assessment is based upon achievement of competency by each student. Competency involves the specification of skills and knowledge and their application to a particular standard of performance required in the workplace. Aspects of work performance included in this concept involve:

- Performance at an acceptable level of technical skill;
- Organising one's tasks;
- Responding and reacting appropriately when things go wrong; and
- Transferring skills and knowledge to new situations and contexts.

### 2.1 Assessment guide

Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on the extent and nature of performance and other requirements, as described in a set of standards, or learning outcomes, resulting in a judgement of whether or not competency has been demonstrated.

Effective and objective assessment is the key to the successful implementation of competency standards in the workplace and in education. This is the judgement of performance and knowledge against the relevant industry competency standards.

Assessment is carried out by the comparison of a candidate's evidence of skills and knowledge, against the requirements of the Standards.

### 2.2 Underlying principles of assessment

For an effective assessment system in a competency environment, some basic principles must apply:

**Validity**

The assessments actually assess what they claim to assess and what they have been designed to assess. Validity of assessment is achieved when:

- 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.

**Authenticity**

The evidence collected is authentic - that is, it is actually derived from valid sources and is directly attributable to the individual.

**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 assessors across industries and a hierarchy of assessment which ensures a quality outcome; and
- Assessment is carried out within a system flexible enough to cope with multiple and diverse forms of evidence.

**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.

**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 individual 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.

**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 assessors to spend more time than necessary per candidate, or too little evidence, making it difficult to judge competence.

**Flexibility**

Every portfolio or set of candidate evidence is unique. Assessors must be capable of taking 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 assessor time and from the viewpoint of the candidate and his or her employer.

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

**Fairness and Equity**

An assessment system and its processes must not disadvantage any person or organisation. All eligible candidates must be guaranteed access to assessment, which does not discriminate on any basis. Assessment guidelines must include an approach for working with candidates who have special needs.

To achieve these principles, the assessment system must exhibit the following characteristics:

- The standards, assessment processes and all associated information are straight forward and understandable;
- The characteristics of potential candidates are identified, to enable all potential assessment issues to be identified and catered for;
- The chosen processes and materials within the system of assessment do not disadvantage candidates;
- An appropriate and effective review and dispute resolution mechanism is in place to investigate, examine and redress any issue of unfairness or disadvantage identified, involving access, assessment, certification or any other related issue; and
- Where potential disadvantages are identified, the system is amended to avoid or counter them, or appropriate steps taken to overcome them including reassessment if required.

## 2.3 Assessors

The role of an assessor is to objectively assess and judge a candidate's evidence against a set of standards. In order to do this effectively, an assessor must have a sound knowledge of, and be skilled in, the relevant industry area. In addition, the assessor must have acknowledged competency in assessment itself and hold an appropriate qualification

An assessor must:

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

The training and ongoing professional development of assessors must include such areas as:

- Roles, responsibilities and ethics;
- Procedural and administrative duties;
- Performance and knowledge evidence gathering and presentation;
- Interpretation and usage of standards;
- Selecting and using appropriate methods of assessment; and
- The requirements regarding processing and recording of results, progress and feedback.

It is crucial that assessors always understand and practise fair, objective, unbiased and flexible assessment processes. Assessors are encouraged to contribute to the assessment strategy development and conduct the assessment process cognisant to existing best practice and research in the relevant field.

## 2.4 RPL Assessment process

Survive First Aid Pty Ltd will ensure that all RPL assessments undertaken are completed and recorded appropriately.

The following will occur when assessing an RPL application:

- On receipt of the RPL Application Form and relevant documentation from the student, the evidence will be assessed against the competency standards for the particular Units of Competency
- In marking an assessment, trainers/assessors will consider the following:
    - Relevance and nature of evidence provided by the applicant
    - Scope of subject matter covered by the evidence
    - Whether the evidence is sufficient to enable a judgement of competence to be made in regard to the unit, taking into account the required knowledge and skills and the critical aspects of evidence in the relevant units.
    - Determine if the evidence sufficient and reliable

- Where evidence and documentation requires additional information or clarification, this will be discussed with the applicant on the phone or at a scheduled meeting. If an interview needs to be conducted, the trainer/assessor will document all information collected in a Report that will be stored with the students RPL Application and evidence submitted.
- All original documents such as certificates, workplace reports, etc., should be copied after being sighted by the Trainer and Assessor and then the copy signed with a date, signature, printed name of the Trainer and Assessor.
- Where RPL is 'Granted' this information will be communicated in writing to the student within 10 business days of completion of the assessment, and the Qualification/ Statement of Attainment will then be issued
- Where RPL is 'Not Granted' students will be notified in writing of the outcome within 10 business days of completion of the assessment. The written communication to the student is to including a reason for refusal (where applicable)
- In all cases, a copy of the RPL documentation and outcome will be kept in the student's file

## 2.5 Forms of Evidence

In general, forms of skills evidence include:

- Direct performance evidence - current or from an acceptable past period - from:
  - o Extracted examples within the workplace;
  - o Observation in the workplace; and
  - o Simulations, including competency and skills tests, projects, assignments

Supplementary evidence, from:

- Oral and written questioning;
- Personal reports; and
- Third party reports

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

- Evaluation of direct products of work;
- Observation;
- Skill tests, simulations and projects;
- Evaluation of underpinning knowledge and understanding;
- Questioning and discussion; and
- Evidence from prior achievement and activity.

## 3. Candidates with Special Needs and Reasonable adjustment

One fundamental principle of an assessment system is that each candidate must have access to fair and open assessment. Candidates with special needs should be offered the same opportunities as any other candidate.

As special needs extend to more than identified physical or learning difficulties, an assessor will also need to consider the best approach (e.g. Extra time to attend exams) when dealing with candidates with needs such as low literacy, lack of confidence or non-English speaking background (e.g. mature aged students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse background) An assessor must take special needs into consideration when assessing and depending on any specification given in the standards/training and assessment strategies, the assessor may be able to accept alternative evidence from a candidate with special needs. Each training and assessment strategy will have allowable reasonable adjustment processes identified for the assessor. If there is uncertainty, the assessor should call on other assessors or a verifier for assistance and guidance, as required. In such a case, the situation must be fully documented, with appropriate feedback being provided to the candidate at all stages.

## 4. Use of simulation in assessment

Where simulation of the workplace is used, such simulations must match the real workplace context as closely as possible. In particular, they should provide an assessment environment that allows for the demonstration of the broad concept of competency, notably:

- Performing the task
- Managing a number of different tasks
- Coping with irregularities and breakdowns in routine
- Dealing with the responsibilities and expectations of the workplace, including working with others
- Transferring competency to new situations

The validity of simulations depends very much on how accurately the simulation mirrors real life situations. Simulations include fully realistic 'mock ups' and more simple recreations of the workplace environment that 'set up' an event for the purposes of learning and/or assessment. They may either expect the student to act as they would in real life, or to act and talk their way through the process.
Simulations allow the assessor to 'stage' the situation in a realistic manner but within defined and repeatable contexts. This allows the assessor to apply the same simulation, or the same 'base' simulation with variations, to different students and/or to the same student over time.
Simulations must be:

- Allowed within the constraints of the units of competency and Training Package being assessed
- Carefully planned and managed by people with specialist training in simulation and/or in consultation with the training organisation involved
- Fully debriefed and used as an active learning experience for the students and all others involved in the simulation
- Used in balance with evidence from other sources to show evidence of consistent performance over time

When conducting and assessing simulations, it is recommended that:

- The task is aligned with the elements and performance criteria and it is structured accordingly
- Clear and explicit information is provided to the students as to what is expected of students
- The task is authentic and real-world based
- Learning experience is scaffolded, breaking tasks down to manageable size

When making a judgement about competence on the basis of evidence gained mainly through simulations—as with any other assessment judgement—the assessor will need to take account of both the wording and the 'spirit' of the competency, its relationship with other units of competency and current workplace practices. In some instances, a Training Package may state that certain units of competency can only be assessed in an 'actual' workplace setting.

## 5. Reassessment

Each student will be given an opportunity for **one reassessment** for any assessments not achieved on the first attempt. Where a student has failed to satisfactorily pass a written assessment, the student will be required to complete another assessment task. Where the assessment task involves observation either in a simulated environment or in the workplace, the student will be required to demonstrate the same skills as required in the first assessment task

After the **second attempt** if performance is still unsatisfactory, students will be required to repeat the unit.