Assessment

At Rowe Training and Consulting we recognise that assessment is a core service offered to our students and is at the centre of our operation as a Registered Training Organisation. Quality assessment ensures that the skills and knowledge of students are assessed using four principal determinants:

- That assessment decisions are based on the assessment of skills and knowledge compared with units of competence drawn from industry Training Packages or State accredited courses.
- That the target industry or enterprise requirements are contextualised and integrated within the assessment.
- That evidence is gathered that meets the rules of evidence.
- That assessment is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment.

Principles of assessment

In the delivery of assessment services, Rowe Training and Consulting applies the principles of assessment. Assessment strategies have been designed to ensure:

- **Validity.** We conduct assessment against the broad range of skills and knowledge identified within each unit of competence and which is integrated with their practical application.

- **Reliability.** We seek to gather and interpret evidence in a consistent manner that provides for reliable assessment both for the student and for assessors. We achieve this by using assessors who have the required competencies in assessment and the relevant vocational competencies. Our assessment resources also provide for standardised outcomes supported by model answers to guide assessors in their judgements. Reliability is also supported by the moderation of assessment judgements across our assessors.

- **Flexibility.** We strive to provide assessment opportunities that reflect a student’s needs. Our chosen assessment strategies provide for recognition of a student’s current competence, employ a range of methods appropriate to the context of the industry, the competency and the student.

- **Fairness.** Our assessment approach encourages fairness in assessment through consideration of the students’ needs and characteristics and through making reasonable adjustments when it is required. Assessors achieve this through clear communication with a student to ensure that the student is fully informed about, understands and is able to participate in, the assessment process, and agrees that the process is appropriate.

Benchmarks for assessment
Rowe Training and Consulting uses units of competence drawn from nationally endorsed industry Training Packages as our primary benchmark for assessment. Supporting this are industry standards or codes of practice. These and other industry specific publications inform the context and standard of performance during assessment.

In order to identify the precise assessment criteria, we apply a methodology of unpacking a unit of competence in order to assess the full scope of the unit including elements of competence and performance criteria, incorporating range statement information and the specific requirements of the evidence guide. This process ensures that our assessment strategies accurately reflect the requirements of the relevant training package.

Engagement with industry

Rowe Training and Consulting is well placed to leverage off current industry associations to incorporate industry requirements into the assessment process. Consultation with enterprises or industry will provide information about assessment requirements relevant to workplaces. Regulatory requirements that relate to specific units of competence will be incorporated to ensure our students are well prepared for their workplace duties. Further information on industry engagement can be found in the Industry Engagement Policy.

Collecting evidence that counts – the rules of evidence

In collecting evidence, Rowe Training and Consulting applies the rules of evidence to inform the assessment strategy. Assessment strategies have been designed to ensure:

- **Sufficiency.** We prioritise the collection of enough appropriate evidence to ensure that all aspects of competency have been satisfied and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly.

- **Validity.** We collect evidence that is specified in the benchmarks for assessment. Rowe Training and Consulting places significant emphasis on direct evidence that is gathered in a workplace through observation and meeting work outcomes. Where this is impractical due to geographic distance, other forms of evidence are used such as industry evidence and detailed assessment of underpinning knowledge.

- **Authenticity.** We seek evidence that is authentic. To support this, assessors must be assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the students own work. Where documentary evidence is relied on it must be certified or supported by two other forms of evidence which demonstrate the same skill or knowledge (triangulation). In all instances, where work is submitted external to Rowe Training and Consulting (i.e. online) this is to include a statement by the student on the cover page that they certify the work as their own, and it is submitted by them with security protected username and password access to the Learning Management System- Moodle.

- **Currency.** We must be satisfied that the student currently holds the skills and knowledge relating to a particular assessment. This will mostly relate to recognition applications where a student has been
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in the workplace for many years and is seeking recognition of skills and knowledge obtained through workplace experience or previous training. We will apply assessment strategies which satisfy currency through the gathering of direct evidence in the workplace.

Assessment context

Rowe Training and Consulting recognises the importance of establishing the right context for students during their assessment. Assessment context refers to the physical and non-physical environment in which skills and knowledge are assessed. This may be a workplace such as a Family Day Care home or a Child Care Service. The non-physical environment refers to things such as workplace policy and procedure, workplace tempo and culture. Many units of competence may be applied in any workplace such as skills and knowledge relating to workplace safety or leadership.

It is our responsibility to ensure that students are provided with the right context to undertake their assessment activities. To achieve this, we will apply the following strategies:

- Incorporation of the students' own workplace policies and procedures into the assessment scenario or activity.
- Conduct of the assessment in the students' workplace performing real workplace tasks.
- Integration of relevant industry codes of practice/regulations and other industry information into the assessment activity.
- Incorporation of industry job descriptions for students to align with during realistic simulated workplace scenarios and case studies.
- Incorporation of regulatory information relating to standards which applies to some qualifications.
- Tailoring the program outcomes to meet the organisational training needs of the enterprise, e.g. family day care, outside school hours care or long day care without compromising the Training Package requirements.
- Creating assessment activities which require the student to conduct specific research relating to industry situations and occurrences.

Recognition of prior learning

Rowe Training and Consulting will provide all students the opportunity to seek recognition of their prior learning. Recognition is viewed simply as another method of assessment and therefore is conducted in accordance with this policy. Further information can be found in this document in the sections on Recognition.

Credit transfer
Rowe Training and Consulting will recognise and award credit for students presenting with current competence. Where a student is seeking credit for a unit of competence that is on our scope of registration and the student can provide satisfactory evidence that the unit has been previously awarded to the student, credit will be awarded. Further information can be found in this document in the sections on Credit Transfer.

**Competence of assessors**

In accordance with the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations, assessors are required to hold the minimum competencies for assessment as outlined by the National Quality Council and the vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed. Rowe Training and Consulting has appropriate systems in place to ensure that all staff members are appropriately qualified to meet our requirement under the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations. Further information can be found in this document in the section on Staff Qualification.

Where an assessor does not hold the required training and assessment competence, but is a recognised industry expert, we will put appropriate supervision arrangements in place to support the gathering of valid evidence. Further guidance on supporting these assessors can be found in this document in the sections on Assessment Partnership.

**Assessment validation**

Assessment validation is the process where assessors compare and evaluate their assessment methods, assessment procedures and assessment decisions. Rowe Training and Consulting will facilitate regular assessment validation opportunities to maintain a quality assessment and to continuously improve assessment strategies. Further information can be found in this document in the sections on Assessment Validation.

**Assessment tools**

Assessment tools are the media (electronic or hard copy) used to gather evidence about a student’s competence. We have developed assessment tools which support the assessment of applicable units of competence in accordance with the requirements of industry Training Packages. It is important for Rowe Training and Consulting staff members to acknowledge that these are generic tools which provide us with a starting point for the development of other supporting tools which will reflect the needs of our clients or target industry group. Rowe Training and Consulting staff members must be satisfied that tools developed for assessment fit with the requirements of the target industry and enterprise requirements. Some units of competence are associated with licensing requirements and whilst this is not always stipulated in the unit of competence, we will need to be informed of the additional requirements this imposes during assessment.

The following are examples of assessment tools which may be incorporated into an assessment strategy to meet the Training Package and industry requirements, the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment:
Direct observation, Logbooks;
- Project outlines;
- Written questionnaires/tasks;
- Verbal questionnaires/interview conversations;
- Portfolios, for example collections of work samples by the student;
- Industry/workplace evidence/third party reports.

This list of assessment tools identifies only a small number of assessment tools which are in use in the VET sector today. These are however the more common tools and support holistic assessment methods favoured by Rowe Training and Consulting.

**Assessment information**

Assessment information is the information provided to both students and assessors to guide their conduct of the assessment and the completion of assessment activities. This information explains firstly what the types of assessment tools are used in their course and what assessments will need to be completed for them to be found competent within a unit of competency. This information also includes the marking of assessments and feedback to the students. Further each type of assessment tool has "instructions" used to draw out a response from a student.

At Rowe Training and Consulting our assessment activities are to be supported by clear assessment information that will ensure a reliable assessment across our operation. Ultimately, the quality of assessment outcomes produced by a student will be directly affected by the quality of the information provided at the commencement of the activity. Rowe Training and Consulting assessment resources are all developed and approved by Chief Executive Officer.

**Collecting industry evidence**

At Rowe Training and Consulting we place a high value on the assessment evidence that is gathered by supervisors or employers in the workplace. This evidence is usually very current and valid and contributes to the assessment decisions made by a qualified assessor. We do not however advocate the use of industry evidence (also referred to as third party evidence) as a substitute for the gathering of direct evidence by an assessor. In all areas of our operation, industry evidence is only to be used to complement and support the evidence being gathered by an assessor.

In addition to this, during the development of assessment tools, Rowe Training & Consulting has ensured that the criteria for industry evidence reports are wholly task orientated. These criteria should reflect the tasks that the supervisor would issue to an employee and monitor during normal workplace duties. The industry evidence report is not to contain assessment criteria drawn from an industry Training Package as these assessment criteria are suitable only for trained and qualified assessors.
Re-assessment

It is inevitable that some students will not meet the requirements of the assessment evidence and will be judged as not-yet-competent. At Rowe Training and Consulting, our approach to these situations is the work with the student in order to address deficiencies and to build their skill and knowledge in preparation for additional assessment. This will be undertaken within the scheduled training plan or may be completed under alternative arrangements agreed between the student and the assessor.

In some rare circumstances, students may find it difficult to develop the necessary skills and knowledge within the constraints of the scheduled training plan. When this occurs, arrangements may be agreed to that allows the student to undertake additional learning in their own time and return for additional assessment at a time suitable for Rowe Training and Consulting. This may be during a period of reduced training activity or at a time when planned assessments are occurring and it is convenient to facilitate the additional assessment of the student. As a general guide, assessors are to make alternative arrangements to provide opportunities for assessment within the constraints of available time and resources. In all circumstances, the assessment is to be a planned activity that is conducted in accordance with the assessment procedures in the following section.

In some cases, after alternative arrangements have been exhausted, it will be suitable to find a student as not-yet-competent and record this result with their statement of attainment.

The following procedure is to be applied for conducting assessments:

- **Step 1: Prepare for assessment.** The assessor is to:
  - Establish the context and purpose of the evidence to be collected;
  - Identify and analyse the units of competency, Training Package and the Rowe Training and Consulting assessment strategy to identify the evidence requirements; and
  - Review the assessment tools and confirm their currency and adequacy in meeting the rules of evidence.

- **Step 2: Prepare the student.** The assessor meets with the student to:
  - Explain the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process;
  - Explain the units of competency to be assessed and the evidence to be collected;
- Outline the assessment procedure and the preparation the student should undertake, and answer any questions;

- Assess the needs of the student and, where applicable, negotiate reasonable adjustment for assessing people with disabilities without compromising the competency outcomes;

- Seek feedback regarding the students understanding of the units of competency, evidence requirements and assessment process; and

- Determine if the student is ready for assessment and, in consultation with the student, decide on the time and place of the assessment.

- **Step 3: Plan and prepare the evidence-gathering process.** The assessor must:
  
  - Follow the plan set out in Rowe Training and Consulting Assessment Strategy for gathering sufficient quality evidence about the learner's consistent performance in order to make the assessment decision;

  - Access approved assessment materials to assist the evidence-gathering process;

  - Organise workplace visits/student interview times to support the evidence-gathering process; and

  - Coordinate and brief workplace supervisors and other personnel involved in the evidence-gathering process.

- **Step 4: Collect the evidence and make the assessment decision.** The assessor must:
  
  - Establish and oversee the evidence-gathering process to ensure its validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility;

  - Collect appropriate evidence according to compatibility to the elements, performance criteria, range statement and evidence guide in the relevant units of competency as in Rowe Training and Consulting's mapping tools;

  - Evaluate evidence in terms of the four dimensions of competency - task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills;

  - Incorporate allowable adjustments to the assessment procedure without compromising the integrity of the competencies;

  - Evaluate the evidence in terms of validity, consistency, currency, authenticity and sufficiency;

  - Consult and work with other trainers and personnel involved in the assessment process;
▪ Record details of evidence collected; and

▪ Make a judgement about the students competence based on the evidence and the relevant unit(s) of competency.

- **Step 5: Provide feedback on the assessment.** The assessor must provide advice to the learner about the outcomes of the assessment process. This includes providing the student with:

  ▪ Clear and constructive feedback on the assessment decision;
  ▪ Information on ways of overcoming any identified gaps in competency revealed by the assessment;
  ▪ The opportunity to discuss the assessment process and outcome; and
  ▪ Information on reassessment and the appeals process if applicable.

- **Step 6: Record and report the result.** The assessor must:

  ▪ Record the assessment outcome according to the policies and procedures of Rowe Training and Consulting;
  ▪ Maintain records of the assessment procedure, evidence collected and the outcome according to the policies and procedures of Rowe Training and Consulting;
  ▪ Maintain the confidentiality of the assessment outcome; and
  ▪ Organise the issuance of statements of attainment with administration according to the policies and procedures of Rowe Training and Consulting.

- **Step 7: Review the assessment process.** On completion of the assessment process, the assessor must:

  ▪ Review the assessment process;
  ▪ Report on the positive and negative features of the assessment at training meetings; and
  ▪ If necessary, suggest to appropriate Rowe Training and Consulting personnel (CEO) ways of improving the assessment procedures through raising a Continuous Improvement Report or by providing input to the next scheduled assessment validation.

- **Step 8: Participate in the reassessment and appeals process.** The assessor must:
- Provide feedback and counselling to the student, if required, regarding the assessment outcome or process, including guidance on further options;

- Provide the student with information on the reassessment and appeals process;

- Report any assessment decision that is disputed by the student to appropriate Rowe Training and Consulting personnel; and

- Participate in the reassessment or appeal according to the policies and procedures of Rowe Training and Consulting.
Assessment Process

Start

Assessor Prepares Themselves

Assessor prepares candidate for assessment

Assessor plans and prepares evidence gathering process

Candidate undertakes assessment

Assessor collects assessment evidence and makes and records a decision

Assessor provides candidate with assessment outcome and feedback

Is candidate competent?

Y

Assessor advises candidate of re-assessment process

Assessor reports assessment results to Administration

Assessor reviews assessment process and raises Continuous Improvement Report if required

End

N
Recognition

In accordance with the requirements of the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations, Rowe Training and Consulting provides the opportunity for students to apply to have prior learning recognised toward a qualification or units of competence for which they are enrolled.

Recognition generally takes two forms: recognition of prior learning, which is the focus of this policy, and credit transfer which is dealt with in the Credit Transfer section of this document. For the purposes of this policy, recognition of prior learning will be referred to simply as recognition.

What is recognition?

Recognition involves the assessment of previously unrecognised skills and knowledge an individual has achieved outside the formal education and training system. Recognition assesses this unrecognised learning against the requirements of a unit of competence, in respect of both entry requirements and outcomes to be achieved. By removing the need for duplication of learning, recognition encourages an individual to continue upgrading their skills and knowledge through structured education and training towards formal qualifications and improved employment outcomes. This has benefits for the individual and industry. Most importantly, it should be noted that recognition is just another form of assessment and requires the same application of policy and procedures outlined in the Assessment section of this document.

Recognition guidelines

The following guidelines are to be followed when an application for recognition is received:

- Any student is entitled to apply for recognition in a course or qualification in which they are currently enrolled.
- Students may not apply for recognition for units of competence or qualification which are not included in Rowe Training and Consulting’s scope of registration.
- Whilst students may apply for recognition at any time, they are encouraged to apply before commencing a training program. This will reduce unnecessary training and guide the student down a more efficient path to competence.
- Students who are currently enrolled in a training program are eligible to apply for recognition in that program at no additional charge.
- Assessment via recognition is to apply the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.
- Recognition may only be awarded for whole units of competence.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Advisory Board, 2004
Version 3.0, March 2013
Policies and Procedures
Forms of evidence

Recognition acknowledges that workplace skills and knowledge may be gained through a variety of ways including both formal and informal learning or through work-based or life experience.

In evaluating assessment evidence, Rowe Training and Consulting applies the following rules of evidence:

- Sufficient,
- Valid,
- Authentic, and
- Current.

Like assessment, recognition is a process whereby evidence is collected and a judgement is made by an assessor or assessment team. The judgement is made on evidence provided by students of the skills and knowledge that they have previously learnt through work, study, life and other experiences, and that they are currently using. It also includes evidence to confirm a student’s ability to adapt prior learning or current competence to the context of the intended workplace or industry.

Forms of evidence toward recognition may include:

- Work records;
- Records of workplace training;
- Assessments of current skills;
- Assessments of current knowledge;
- Third party reports from current and previous supervisors or managers;
- Evidence of relevant unpaid or volunteer experience;
- Examples of work products;
- Observation by an assessor in the workplace;
- Performance appraisal; or
- Duty statements.

Many of these forms of evidence would not be sufficient evidence on their own. When combined together with a number of evidence items, the student will start to provide a strong case for competence. Rowe Training and Consulting reserves the right to require students to undertake
practical assessment activities of skills and knowledge in order to satisfy itself of a student’s current competence. Assessor will use the RPL Toolkit 2012 (DEEWR) as a guide to collecting evidence and student information.

**Appealing recognition outcomes**

If the student is not satisfied with the outcomes of a recognition application, they may appeal the outcome like other assessment decisions. Further information on the appeals process is available at section three.

**Recognition Procedure**

The following procedure is to be applied by Rowe Training and Consulting upon receipt of an application for recognition:

**Step 1** Provide sufficient information to prospective students to inform them of opportunities for alternative pathways via recognition and the recognition process.

**Step 2** Students who request recognition of their current competence are to be invited to carry out a self-assessment prior to enrolment to determine their suitability for a recognition application (using the Recognition Self-Assessment Tool). This step is not compulsory but is strongly suggested. The student should be provided an electronic version of the RPL application documents.

**Step 3** Undertake a recognition assessment planning interview between the assessor and the student (using the Recognition Assessment Plan). This is to include where possible:

- Helping the student to identify appropriate forms of evidence;
- Guiding the student on the use of recognition tools; and
- Informing the student about the assessment process.

**Step 4** Students are to compile their recognition submission (using the RPL toolkit). This allows students to record their particular documentary evidence against each unit of competence and to attach this evidence as required.

**Step 5** The Assessor is then to review the assessment evidence and decide on the need for additional evidence on perceived gaps. The Assessor may invite the student to undertake a recognition interview to answer verbal questions or a practical assessment. At the end of the evidence gathering process the Assessor is to provide the student with written feedback regarding the assessment outcomes, including the procedure for the student to appeal the assessment outcome.

**Step 6** If the student is not satisfied with the outcomes of a recognition application, they may appeal the outcome like any other assessment decision. Refer the student to the appeals process which can be found in the Operational Plan.
Step 7 When all assessment and appeal processes have concluded, the assessment outcome is to be recorded in the students records and issue the student with written advice of the outcome. This may include issuing statements of attainment or qualifications awarded through recognition in accordance with Rowe Training and Consulting Qualifications Issuance policies and procedures.
Recognition Process

Start

Inform students of recognition opportunities
Must be done pre-enrolment

Student indicates a recognition request at enrolment

Student is provided with an RPL application and invited to complete an optional self-assessment prior to enrolment

Student enrols and submits an RPL application
A student can apply for recognition at any time

Assessor reviews self-assessment, if available

Assessor meets with candidate and conducts an assessment planning interview

Candidate compiles and submits RPL assessment evidence

Assessor reviews RPL assessment evidence

Is further evidence required?

Y

Assessor advises candidate of additional requirements

N

Assessor advises candidate of RPL assessment outcome

Can recognition be granted?

Y

Assessor advises candidate of other assessment options and the appeals process

N

Assessor reports RPL assessment results to Administration

Assessor reviews RPL assessment process and raises Continuous Improvement Report if required

End