Assessment

POLICY

Division	Policy number
LMIT – QMS - POL	011-V1

Updated	Implemented
24/8/2015	31/8/2015

Reviewed by

Melanie MacDonald
Chief Executive Officer

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support standard 1 clause 1.8 -1.12, Standard 5 clause 5.1-5.4, and standard 6 clauses 6.1 - 6.6

2. Scope

This policy applies to all LMIT team members.

3. Policy

Learner assessment is a vital part of the learning process. Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgments as to how well learners have achieved the intended learning outcomes. It is the means by which progress or achievement in a unit is evaluated. Assessment is a key part of the teaching and learning environment.

The following general principles underpin Line Management Institute of Training's (LMIT) Assessment Policy.

- Assessment should be an aid to successful learning and should encourage learners to apply their knowledge and skills in an analytical and critical manner
- Modes of assessment should be specifically linked to the learning outcomes of a unit and a course
- Assessment requirements should be based on pre-determined and clearly articulated criteria that describe standards of knowledge, skills, competencies and/or capabilities
- Learners should receive feedback on their work in a timely manner that assists them to monitor their progress towards the achievement of specified learning outcomes and to improve the quality of their work
- Assessment should be inclusive and equitable for all learners
- Assessments should be valid, reliable, fair and flexible
- The purpose of assessment for learners is to:
  - o Provide feedback on how effectively they are learning
  - o Engage them in learning
  - o Provide evidence that they have reached the required standard
  - o Provide evidence to show other people of their learning achievements

Assessments

In general terms assessment during training may include,

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

Integrated assessment of some units may occur.

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

The Training coordinators are responsible for ensuring that sufficient evidence is collected during the assessment process to enable judgments to be made about whether competency has been obtained.

The LMIT Trainer is responsible for collecting evidence for the assessment process. This evidence may include:

- Assessment activities
- Supervisors/ Manager /Mentors/ Third Party Evidence Report
- Practical Activities

From these assessment tools the LMIT Trainer is able to determine whether sufficient evidence has been supplied to judge whether competency has been obtained. This can be verified by the use of mapping documentation which has been developed for all units of competency. Once sufficient evidence has been gathered and the LMIT Trainer believes that the evidence meets the principles of assessment then the assessment decision is made.

LMIT's 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.

Assessment results

Each unit of competence is allocated a result as follows:

Competence – C – Competent is awarded for a learner who has achieved all of the learning outcomes specified for that unit/module to the specified standard

Not Yet Competent – NYC – Not Yet Competent is awarded to a learner who has not achieved all of the learning outcomes specified for that unit/module to the specified standard.

Assessments for all vocational programs at LMIT are developed according to the rules outlined in each of the Training Package and accredited course unit. Assessment activities undertaken by LMIT always follow the methodology outlined:

- Assessment procedures are fully explained to learners. Throughout all training learners and employers are regularly reminded of the ongoing availability of assessment
- Opportunities for Recognition of Prior Learning - RPL are also discussed as are any available flexible methods of assessment.
- The assessment requirements of the units of competence are outlined and any particular arrangements for the workplace/training environment are arranged.
- All evidence-gathering methods remain reliable, flexible, fair and valid
- As assessments are undertaken LMIT Trainers record individual learner assessment results. Copies of assessments are retained.
- Post-assessment guidance is always provided to the learner.

- A fair and impartial appeals process is always available.
- Evaluation of assessment processes and procedures is gathered on an on-going basis.

Assessment guide

Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgments on the extent and nature of performance and other requirements, as described in a set of standards, or learning outcomes, resulting in a judgment 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 judgment 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.

The Training and Quality Manager and Director is responsible for ensuring that all assessments conducted by LMIT comply with the principles of validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility

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.
- Assessors are to ensure that assessment tasks and methods match assessment requirements. For example, if assessing a practical skill such as keyboarding, questions about how a keyboard operates may not be valid as this knowledge is not required in order to carry out the task. Instead, use questions that demonstrate knowledge of why the learner is doing the task in a particular way.
- The assessor is assured that the learner has the skills, knowledge across a range of environments and contexts relevant to the unit or module or unit of competency and associated assessment requirements.
- Assessing learners in a variety of contexts shows that the learner is able to apply the skills and knowledge in other situations and can apply their knowledge in a practicable way.

Authenticity

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

Authenticity is determined when the assessor is assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the learner's own work.

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 judgment is consistent across the range, without undue reliance on any small number of select workplace contexts or projects.

Currency and Consistency

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

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 3-5 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. Currency is a particular risk with recognition of prior learning, as assessors may be presented with a range of evidence gathered over a number of years. This does not mean evidence that is not recent is not valid; however, assessors must ensure there is sufficient evidence of the person's competence at the time you make the assessment decision.

Assessors must determine whether the evidence is recent enough to show the learner is competent at the time you make an assessment decision. *For example, a computer programmer who has 10 years' experience but has not been directly involved in hands-on programming work for the past three years may not have current skills in or knowledge of contemporary programming methods. However, the programmer may be able to update their skills and knowledge though a 'gap training' program.* This varies to some extent between industries and, as a person with current industry skills and knowledge, an assessor is well placed to make this judgement.

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.

Sufficiency is determined when the assessor is assured that the quality, quantity and relevance of the assessment evidence enables a judgement to be made of a learner's competency.

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.

- At enrolment or prior to commencement of training, LMIT make recognition of prior learning available to all learners. Ensure any required adjustments are made to the training and assessment program for that learner.
- LMIT takes the learner into account in the assessment process, and recognise that they may already have demonstrated some aspects of the unit through other means. If individual learners have demonstrated current skills and knowledge, they should not be required to be reassessed in those areas, unless the previous demonstration of skills or knowledge is in a significantly different context or environment.
- Use a range of assessment methods to help produce valid decisions and recognise that learners demonstrate competence in a variety of ways.

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.

- At enrolment or prior to commencement of training, LMIT staff make recognition of prior learning – RPL available to all learners. Ensure that any required adjustments are made to the training and assessment program for each learner.
- LMIT considers the learner's needs in the assessment process and make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the learner (such as providing oral rather than written assessment). However, don't compromise the rigour of the assessment process (e.g. if there is a requirement to complete documentation in a unit of competency, oral assessment would not be appropriate).
- LMIT ensures the learner is fully informed of the assessment process and performance expectations before undertaking assessment.

- If a learner is unable to complete the required task to the level described in the assessment requirements, consider whether they need further training before being reassessed. LMIT has a sound enrolment processes will help to identify the needs of learners and avoid learners being enrolled in a course that they will not be able to complete.
- LMIT has an appeals process to provide an avenue for learners to challenge an assessment decision and to have it reviewed objectively.

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.

Assessors

Responsibilities – LMIT Trainers

LMIT Trainers have responsibilities within the assessment framework. It is the responsibility of LMIT Trainers to:

- Participate in the assessment of learners
- Liaise with the Director and LMIT Trainers to ensure that assessment practices are conducted in a consistent and coherent manner
- Be available for learner consultation and the provision of advice and support to learners
- Keep a secure record of each learner's results, both electronically and paper-based
- Provide data relating to results in assessment tasks and attendance to LMIT Training administration
- Provide constructive and timely feedback on assessments submitted by learners
- Adhere to assessment strategies and their submission timeframes
- Report on learner progress and achievement in an honest, clear and objective manner and based only on relevant data.

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

It is crucial that assessors always understand and practice 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.

Feedback

LMIT Trainers are responsible for providing feedback to learners on the outcomes of their assessments. This feedback is provided in a number of ways:

In-Centre Education

- Verbal feedback provided as a result of observation, role plays, demonstrations, etc.
- Written feedback provided on Assessment Records on completion of written assessments.
- Verbal feedback provided after Practical activities are conducted

Distance Education

- Verbal feedback provided as a result of workplace assessments.
- Written feedback provided on the Assessment Records on completion of written Assessment.
- Verbal feedback or written feedback provided after Practical activities are conducted.

On-line Learning

- Feedback provided upon review of assessment activities
- Verbal feedback or written provided after Practical Activities are conducted.

The Director and Training and Quality Manager is responsible for ensuring all assessments undertaken by LMIT comply with the assessment guidelines from the various Training Package's and the Learning and Assessment Strategies as issued by LMIT.

LMIT Trainers are provided with access to the Assessment Guidelines for various Training Packages. LMIT Trainers are required to adhere to these guidelines when conducting assessments. LMIT Trainers are also provided with copies of assessment information which is provided by the Director and Training and Quality Manager as well as relevant documentation which is made available internally.

This documentation may include:

- Assessment Activities
- Suggested Answers
- Practical Activities
- Mapping documentation
- Results of moderation activities

LMIT Trainers discuss assessment issues and ensure consistency during informal discussion held during the completion of daily assessment tasks. Moderation meetings may be held both within the office or off premises. Moderation activities assist with reliability of assessments. It is used to:

- Make assessment decisions consistently across different learners and different assessors in the same unit or module.
- Ensure LMIT has a well-designed assessment system that includes measures to minimise variation between assessors. The same evidence presented by different learners or to different assessors should result in the same decision.
- Develop evidence criteria (i.e. decision-making rules) to judge the quality of performance. This will help assessors make consistent judgements about competence.

- Evidence criteria could include:

   o model answers (where appropriate)
   o descriptions of observations needed to assess skills and application of knowledge in a practical activity.

- Benchmarks for practical activities must necessarily be broad enough to allow for variations in the precise task being undertaken and any variations in the context, but must include 'observable behaviours'—the behaviours which must be exhibited by the learner when carrying out the task.

Demonstrable experience and skill

All LMIT Trainers have the required training and qualifications as specified by the VET Quality Framework. This training ensures that they have an understanding of the assessment process and assessment principles. Further professional development is undertaken as required and as a result of discussions during the performance review process.

If LMIT Trainers do not hold the required qualifications they comply with the requirements for supervision by a fully qualified LMIT Trainer.

Forms of Evidence

In general, basic forms of skills evidence include:

- Direct performance evidence - current or from an acceptable past period - from:
- Extracted examples within the workplace;
- Observation in the workplace; and
- 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.

The above principles of assessment apply equally to assessment through recognition of prior leaning - RPL

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 complete assessment) 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.

The Director is responsible for ensuring that all assessments conducted by LMIT are equitable for all persons, taking account of cultural and linguistic needs.

LMIT Trainers are made aware of a learner's individual needs or requirements upon enrolment. LMIT Trainers are aware of the strategies and resources that can be used to assist a learner with individual needs. If a learner has Individual needs the LMIT Trainer will inform the learner of strategies that can be used to assist with the assessment process.

These strategies can include:

- Completing assessments using an audio recorder
- Undertaking workplace assessments through demonstration
- Asking for another colleague/friend/family member to check work before submission and assist with language, literacy or numeracy issues.

If a learner has individual needs the LMIT Training consultants will inform the learner of resources that could be used assist with the assessment process. These resources include:

- Use of an interpreter service
- Use of a workplace mentor
- Use of recording equipment

Responsibilities – learners

Learners also have roles and responsibilities within the assessment framework. It is the responsibility of learners to:

- To be aware of all the requirements to achieve a unit of study/competency
- Engage actively in the learning process and participate according to unit and assessment requirements.

- Complete assessment tasks diligently and honestly to provide evidence of learning achievements in a unit

- Meet assessment requirements as specified in the unit outline, including submission of work by the due date

- Discuss any concerns they have regarding their progress in the completion of units and assessment with their LMIT Trainer

- Consult their LMIT Trainer if personal circumstances are affecting participation or performance in assessment

- To practice academic integrity and avoid plagiarism, cheating and collusion
- To accept fair, helpful and timely feedback on assessment tasks including evaluation of performance and progress in a unit of study/competency.

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 assessee 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 assessees and/or to the same assessee 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 assessee 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:

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

When making a judgment about competence on the basis of evidence gained mainly through simulations—as with any other assessment judgment—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.

Reassessment

Each student will be given an opportunity for **reassessment** for any assessments not achieved on the first attempt. Where a student has failed to satisfactorily a written assessment, the student will be required to complete the assessment task or a different 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 may be required to repeat the unit or activity again.

 Information for clients

The Director and LMIT staff are responsible for ensuring that learners receive adequate information regarding the assessment process as well as the context and purpose of the assessment. Learners and employers receive information about the assessment process and the context and purpose of assessment from the following sources:

- Student handbook
- Learner Guides
- Third party handbook
- Line Management Institute of Training– website
- Moodle/Catapult- website
- Induction process
- Access with LMIT Trainer
- Workplace visits conducted by LMIT (if conducted)

As part of the induction process the LMIT Trainer outlines the assessment process and the responsibilities of the learner, third party, and LMIT Trainer. The LMIT Trainer will, prior to assessment, explain how the assessment will occur, skills and knowledge that needs to be demonstrated, how the assessment decision is made and what will occur if the learner is considered to be 'Not Competent'. Assessment information is posted on the LMIT website.

Quality assurance, adjustment, moderation and validation

The Director and Training and Quality Manager is responsible for the regular review of assessment practices and activities. LMIT has in place a variety of quality assurance systems and mechanisms to ensure that feedback and input from LMIT Trainers, learners and external advisers is collated, analysed and acted upon. Information received in relation to a course and/or unit of study/competency is analysed and improvements incorporated into training and assessment materials.

LMIT choose validators who are independent of delivery and assessment of the training product being validated and, particularly, the assessment judgements being considered to maintain professional distance and integrity.

People involved in validation must have:

- appropriate vocational competencies
- current industry skills and knowledge
- an appropriate training and assessment qualification or assessor skill set
- current knowledge and skills in vocational teaching and learning.

Validation may be undertaken through a 'team' approach where, collectively, team members hold the required qualifications, skills and knowledge. Trainers and assessors can to be involved in validation activities, as long as they were not directly involved in the particular instance of delivery and assessment of the training product being validated.

Confidentiality and Privacy

LMIT Training regards assessment as a confidential matter. No person involved in the process should divulge to any unauthorised person any information related to an individual learner's assessment.

4.   Policy validity statement

If this document has passed its review date (as shown above), it may be invalid. Please ensure you're referring to the most current version before relying on its contents.

5.   References

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

6.   Related Topics

Access and Equity policy

Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure

Privacy Policy

7.   Associated Documentation

Assessor Feedback Forms

Student Handbook

Third Party Guide

Moodle platform

Catapult platform

LMIT website

Training and Assessment Strategy /Delivery Assessment Strategy

Application for prior learning form – Credit Transfers

Recognition Assessment flow chart

Skills review checklists

Recognition of Prior Learning tools

Validation tools

Moderation tools

Welcome emails

8.   Internal Controls

Any Changes required are authorised by the Training and Quality Manager

Document History			
Amended	**Amended By**	**Division**	**Details**
24/8/2015	Bonnie Scobie	TQM	Updated to reflect Standards 2015