



# Quality assurance guide for assessment



Department of Education,  
Training and Youth Affairs



*The Training Package Assessment Materials Project is an initiative of the Australian National Training Authority with funding provided by the Department of Employment, Training & Youth Affairs.*

*The project has been established to support high quality and consistent assessment within the vocational education and training system in Australia.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,  
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## FOREWORD

This guide is one of a suite of ten guides developed in the *Training Package Assessment Materials Project*. The project was one of several initiatives managed by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and funded by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) to facilitate the implementation of Training Packages and in particular New Apprenticeships.

The guides in this *Training Package Assessment Materials Project* aim to provide assessors and managers of assessment processes within the vocational education and training (VET) sector with a range of practical tools and resources for improving assessment practices in both on – and off-the-job situations. The ten guides are:

- Guide 1: Training Package assessment materials kit
- Guide 2: Assessing competencies in higher qualifications
- Guide 3: Recognition resource
- Guide 4: Kit to support assessor training
- Guide 5: Candidate's Kit: Guide to assessment in New Apprenticeships
- Guide 6: Assessment approaches for small workplaces
- Guide 7: Assessment using partnership arrangements
- Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment
- Guide 9: Networking for assessors
- Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment.

Each guide is designed to cover a broad range of industries and VET pathways, with relevance to workplace assessors as well as those working in off-the-job and VET in Schools programs.

The *Training Package Assessment Materials Project* was completed prior to the review and redevelopment of the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training. The project managers and writing teams worked closely with National Assessors and Workplace Trainers (NAWT), a division of Business Services Training, to ensure that the material contained in these guides is in line with future developments in the Training Package. Consequently the guides do not make direct reference to the units of competency in the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training.

The project managers and the writing teams would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who generously provided advice, case study materials, assessment tools and their time to review and pilot these materials.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Part 1: Introduction to this guide</b> .....	<b>7</b>
What is quality assurance in the context of assessment? .	8
Who is this guide for? .....	8

## **PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO THIS GUIDE**

Since the introduction of the National Training Framework and its initiatives (nationally endorsed Training Packages and the *Australian Quality Training Framework [AQTF]*), the consistency with which competency based assessments are conducted in a range of contexts has become increasingly important. The introduction of Training Packages and their role in the recognition of competence and the issuing of qualifications and/or Statements of Attainment has led to an increased focus on assessment.

Critical to a nationally consistent vocational education training system is the process of mutual recognition, which is a key principle underlying the AQTF. It ensures that decisions in relation to vocational education and training have national effect. Under mutual recognition, each State and Territory has agreed to recognise Training Packages and accredited courses and it is a requirement for registration that Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) agree to recognise the AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by other RTOs. This ensures the mutual acceptance throughout Australia of AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment. For the process of mutual recognition to work effectively there needs to be confidence from all stakeholders regarding assessment decisions.

With the New Apprenticeship programs, assessors are required to work in different ways, in new locations and sometimes in partnership with others. In implementing these changes, it is important for assessment to be monitored to ensure that it remains valid, consistent, fair and credible. It is widely acknowledged that there is scope to significantly improve the quality of current assessment processes and practices.

## **What is quality assurance in the context of assessment?**

Quality assurance of assessment is defined as:

*'A planned and systematic process of ensuring that the requirements of the assessment system, competency standards and any other criteria are applied in a consistent manner. Quality assurance mechanisms or procedures are an integral part of an assessment system.'*  
*Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training BSZ98 (ANTA 1998)*

In recent years the quality assurance of assessment has focused on the conduct of assessments. However, assessment activity should also be supported within a quality management system which is concerned with continuous improvement. Therefore there are two major factors driving the demand for assuring the quality of assessment:

- the need to comply with the AQTF requirements
- the philosophy of quality management.

Assuring the quality of assessment will have other benefits for the organisation. Improving the quality and consistency of assessment will help assessors to be more confident about their judgements, candidates to believe that they have been treated fairly, and employers, community and other RTOs to value the qualification issued. A focus on quality in assessment can easily form part of an organisation's overall approach to and management of quality processes.

## **Who is this guide for?**

This guide has been written for people within RTOs who are either responsible for or involved in evaluating and maintaining a vocational education and training assessment system (the guide assumes that the training organisation is already registered with a State/Territory Registering Body and that the basic requirements for registration and audit are in place). This guide will assist managers, assessors and others involved in training and assessment by providing resources and information that are designed to support the requirements of the AQTF and other quality assurance strategies.

The guide contains:

- a general overview of quality assurance
- an explanation of the key assessment components that need to be quality assured

- a set of strategies for RTOs and assessors to use in monitoring and evaluating the key assessment aspects (an explanation is given as to how each strategy might be applied, its particular benefits and the things that need to be considered prior to making any decisions about adopting it)
- some guidance on where else to look for further advice and resources
- a series of proformas, examples and templates to assist in building a quality assessment system within the RTO.