POLICY TITLE: Assessment (Vocational Education and Training)

Purpose

To ensure all VET Trainer and Assessor's follow the correct Photography Studies College (Melbourne) procedures when undertaking assessments and direct students accordingly.

Policy

The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 is the nationally agreed quality training framework for the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) system. As a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), Photography Studies College (Melbourne) is required to adhere to this framework in order to be compliant. In the event of an audit, evidence of correct procedures must be produced.

The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 outlines rules for **student assessment** and it is important that Photography Studies College (Melbourne) complies with these regulations. This means that all assessing VET Trainer and Assessor's must ensure that all requirements are met. These requirements are documented in the Photography Studies College (Melbourne) Teacher Manual.

1. Volume of Learning (Standard 1.1)

The AQF Volume of Learning identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the **learning** outcomes specified for a particular AQF qualification type.

Hours are sourced from the AQF Volume of Learning. All training and assessment practices meet the requirements of VOL. Qualifications are well structured and informed by industry.

Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III*	Certificate IV^	Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Graduate Certificate
0.5 – 1 year	0.5 – 1 year	1 – 2 years	0.5 – 2 years	1 – 2 years	1.5 – 2 years	0.5 – 1 year
600 – 1200 hours	600 – 1200 hours	1200 – 2400 hours	600 – 2400 hours	1200 – 2400 hours	1800 – 2400 hours	600 – 1200 hours

Where applicable, the assessment framework ensures that assessment practices comply with the requirements of the Training Package and VET Accredited Courses regarding training and assessment delivery times, and this is reflected in the Training and Assessment Strategy and individual Training Plans.

2. Principles of Assessment (Standard 1, Clause 1.1 – 1.8)

In accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, assessments for all Units of Competency in Photography Studies College (Melbourne) VET courses utilise the following principles of assessment:

Fairness	The individual learner's needs are considered in the assessment process.
	Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are applied by the RTO to take into account the individual learner's needs.
	The RTO informs the learner about the assessment process, and provides the learner with the opportunity to challenge the result of the assessment and be reassessed if necessary.
Flexibility	Assessment is flexible to the individual learner by: • reflecting the learner's needs; • assessing competencies held by the learner no matter how or where 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.
Validity	Any assessment decision of the RTO is justified, based on the evidence of performance of the individual learner. Validity 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 learner could demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other similar situations; and • judgement of competence is based on evidence of learner performance that is aligned to the unit/s of competency and associated assessment requirements.
Reliability	Evidence presented for assessment is consistently interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.

Rules of Evidence

Evidence collected by assessors fulfils following requirements:

Validity	The assessor is assured that the learner 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 enables a judgement to be made of a learner's competency.
Authenticity	The assessor is assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the learner's own work.
Currency	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.

Assessment tools and strategies are designed for each Unit of Competency to ensure that assessment is a fundamental component of the learning/training process.

Assessment methodologies that Photography Studies College (Melbourne) VET courses utilise vary according to course requirements and the individual Units of Competency. Assessment is designed to deal with the various learning/training needs of students. Photography Studies College (Melbourne) will not disadvantage or discriminate against any student on any basis. The two primary modes of assessment are:

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Assessment as part of the training program.

To underpin assessments as part of the training program, Photography Studies College (Melbourne) has developed, the following:

- Clearly set out instructions to students about the requirements of each assessment task: when, where, how long they have, what resources/equipment they need, what resources will be supplied. This is contained in the Learner Guide and the Assessment Guide for Students;

- Clearly set out arrangements, context and purpose of each Assessment Task;

- Clear written instructions to assessors including any special requirements, how much support can be provided, how to record results and store completed tasks. This is contained in the Assessment Guide for Teachers and Assessment Task exemplars;

- Clearly defined Assessment Criteria: clear and easy to follow assessment recording tools;

- A defined format to be used by students to submit their Assessment Tasks;

- A defined format to be used to provide students with feedback about their Assessment Task submissions; and

- Effective dispute resolution and assessment appeals processes (via our Review of Results procedure and Grievance procedure) which will be used to examine and investigate any issue of unfairness or disadvantage that is identified.

3. Who can Assess

Only VET Trainer and Assessors who are qualified with the current TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment are permitted to assess student work and any RPL applications submitted.

In addition, each VET Trainer and Assessor must be able to demonstrate the following:

- the vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed;

- current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment being provided, and

- current knowledge and skills in vocational training and learning that informs their training and assessment.

4. Assessment Methods

Assessment methods include the collection of a broad range of evidence for the assessor to determine competency.

The following evidence gathering techniques are used in the assessment of Units of Competency. Assessment methods may include the following: (For mapping refer to Training Plan in Appendix One, and Assessment Methodology in Appendix Two)

Key Assessment Methods		
Observation	**O**	Demonstration of a technique or task, practical application of a skill or exercise, simulated environment, role play, workplace activity.
Questioning	**Q**	Verbal or written short answer questions, oral questioning, discussion or interview. Often combined with or conducted at the end of an Observation.
Portfolio of Evidence	**PO**	Collection of work samples, visual diary, annotated & validated pieces of evidence, document collection & creation, visual reference material, documentation of planning, logbooks documenting technical processes, mapping of creative processes including decisions, shoots & ideas.
Report	**R**	Essay, written research, case study, interview, reflection or response to own work.
Project	**PR**	Research evidence, series of images, creative outcome, industry engagement, multiple processes & progress.
Test	**T**	Written questionnaire, MiPlace quiz, written test/quiz, multiple choice, formal written test, true or false.
Presentation	**P**	Oral presentation, Keynote/PowerPoint, demonstration of a skill or exercise, verbal dissemination of knowledge or information.
Third Party Observation	**TH**	Mentor Reports, External Industry Feedback on final body of work, Client feedback

Key Assessment methods	QUES	Questioning (Written or Verbal)	• Generally, more applicable to the assessment of knowledge evidence • Assessment could be by written or oral questioning, conducting interviews and questionnaires • Proposals / Reports / Reflections in response to their work
	PROD	Production of an Item	• Folio project – series of images • Presentation of work in progress • Reports
	PORT	Portfolio of Documents	• A purposeful collection of work samples of annotated and validated pieces of evidence, compiled by the learner • Visual diary - Evidence could include written documents, photographs, videos - this may include planning and mapping of the documentation of creative processes including important decisions, shoots, ideas and failures • Log books documenting technical processes
	OBSV	Direct Observation	• Assessed in a simulated off-the-job situation that reflects the workplace – i.e. Studio, Digital lab • If not observed, video evidence needs to be presented.

	THRD	Third-party Observation	• Mentor reports
			• External industry feedback on final body of work
			• Client feedback

All units of the course specify the assessment requirements and conditions.

Types of Evidence

Evidence can take many forms, however Photography Studies College (Melbourne) requires a balance of evidence collection to ensure it meets the rules of evidence.

Direct	is evidence that can be observed or witnessed by the assessor. This could include observation of workplace performance, oral questioning, demonstration, challenge test
Indirect	is evidence of a student's work that can be reviewed or examined by the assessor. This could include finished products, written assignments or tests, or a portfolio of previous work performed.
Supplementary	is additional evidence presented to assessors to support a student's claim of competence. This could include reports from supervisors, colleagues and/or clients, testimonials from employers, work diaries, evidence of training.

5. Reasonable Adjustment

All individuals enrolling into Photography Studies College (Melbourne) undergo an interview where learner abilities and needs are identified. Skills First funded courses and Units of Competency require a Pre-Training Review to be completed prior to commencement of studies. Based on the outcome of the Pre-Training Review the VET Training Manager will ascertain the suitability of the course being offered and devise a Training Plan to suit the learner's individual needs.

Wherever possible, VET Trainers and Assessors will make reasonable adjustments to learning and assessment processes to ensure that all students are treated equally, and that no person is disadvantaged.

Assessment processes may be reasonably adjusted for the following:

- Students with English as a second language
- Students with literacy or numeracy difficulties
- Students experiencing difficult circumstances[1]
- Indigenous students
- Students with disability and/or medical conditions.

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[1] Examples of difficult circumstance may include but are not limited to: severe family disruption including dealing with alcoholism or drug addiction; long term illness of a family member; divorce/separation of parents including changed living conditions; death of an immediate family member or friend; natural disasters such as drought, bushfire or flood. This is in no way an exhaustive or prescriptive list. It is provided only as a guide to the kind of circumstances a trainer/assessor may be required to consider.

Whilst Reasonable Adjustment does not mean accepting a lower standard of outcome, it may mean undertaking any of the following:

- Adjusting the delivery arrangements of the course
- Making changes to the assessment deadlines - (extensions)
- Making changes to the assessment arrangements
- Making changes to the way evidence for assessment is gathered.

All reasonable adjustments are recorded in a learners file or on their Training Plan if relevant.

Under special circumstances students may apply for an extension for the submission of their assignment work by completing the Application for Extension form prior to the due date of the assessment task. The length of an extension will be determined at the discretion of the VET Trainer and Assessor and shall be deemed to be lapsed after the completion of the following study period/semester. Any work outstanding after this time will result in Not Yet Competent status.

6. Information about Assessment

Prior to Assessment: To enable students to prepare for all assessment requirements, students will be informed of the assessment arrangements for each unit. Information about each Assessment Task is provided at the commencement of each Unit of Competency or unit cluster (subject) by issuing the Learner Guide and the Assessment Guide. Students are provided with information about the timing, context and purpose of all Assessment Tasks as well as the Assessment Criteria against which they are being assessed.

At the conclusion of Assessment: Following any Assessment Task, feedback - both verbal and written - is provided to students about the outcomes of the assessment process. Students are to be given constructive feedback from their assessor on the outcomes of assessment and on opportunities for further development whenever it is identified.

In the instance a student has not met the competency requirements of a Unit of Competency the student will be provided specific feedback regarding which Assessment Criteria have not been met. Students will be given an opportunity to resubmit Assessment Tasks with amendments within 7 days of receiving feedback. Students will be given a maximum of 3 opportunities to resubmit. Failure to successfully achieve competency once the 3 resubmission opportunities have been exhausted will result in a final grade of Not Yet Competent.

It is a guiding pedagogical principle at Photography Studies College (Melbourne) that assessment is an integral part of the learning/training process. For this reason, all assessment results must be provided to students in a timely manner, with feedback that assists them with their learning and enables them to improve their performance. All assessment results will be returned to students no later than 14 days after receipt.

7. Assessment, Validation and Moderation

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) ensures assessors participate in regular validation and moderation activities to ensure their teaching practices and assessment decisions are:

- consistent between assessors

- valid

- fair

- flexible and reliable

- based on evidence that is valid, reliable, sufficient and current

- assessment documentation is validated against the curriculum periodically as outlined in the validation plan.

The central method for validation and moderation of graded assessment at Photography Studies College (Melbourne) is through the assessment of the photographic folios that are presented at the conclusion of each study period/semester. These Units of Competency are culminating units whereby the assessment criteria require students to demonstrate outcomes derived from learning in all the units undertaken in the particular study period/semester.

Each of the folios presented for assessment are subject to panel assessment. Panel assessment involves independent but concurrent assessment by two or more assessors. Records of the meetings and outcomes of Panel assessment are kept by the Panel Chair and tabled at the VET Leadership Team.

The method for validation and moderation of training package courses and training packaged units in accredited courses is through the monitoring of students' progress through their course.

Development of an Assessment Validation and Moderation Action Plan - This plan includes when validation and/or moderation meetings occur, how the procedure for validation and/or moderation is conducted, what Units of Competency are included, what percentage of assessed work is to be scrutinised, what other strategies are used by trainer/assessors to support assessment validation.

Validation

Forms of validation at Photography Studies College (Melbourne) may include:

- **Undertaking Validation Panel meetings** to provide the opportunity for trainer/assessors to:
    - Discuss the assessment methods and tools they have used
    - Discuss the assessment decisions they have made
    - Scrutinise the evidence that has been presented by candidates
    - Check that there has been consistent interpretation of the standards in both the design of the instrument and the judgement made
    - Discuss other aspects of the assessment process.

- **Maintaining records** of the validation process and the outcomes as a basis for informing the continuous improvement process of the college.

- **Exhibiting current work by students** – for public display throughout the college as exemplars of best practice relevant to each year level.

- **Participating in industry programs and partnerships** – such as photography industry awards and internship programs approved by the College.

- **Validation of Assessment Tools** – VET Trainers and Assessors will confirm the validity of assessment tools and instruments by completing a Quality Review Checklist of Learner Guides, Assessment Guides and Mapping for each Unit of Competency.

Moderation

Forms of assessment moderation at Photography Studies College (Melbourne) may include any or all of the following:

- **Panel Assessment** (as previously described)

- **External Industry Assessment** – in the final year of their course, each student is required to present their folio to a panel of industry experts

- **Exemplar work by past students** – Discussion of Assessment Tasks, with reference to exemplars of responses by previous students to the same or similar tasks in order to clarify task requirements.

Support in decision making – academic and peer support is available as needed for both new and experienced trainer/assessors. This is provided by discussion with the Course Director VET Programs and/or convener(s), through peer mentoring and during a regular meeting program.

8. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious matter and Photography Studies College (Melbourne) has measures in place to detect and prevent plagiarism and cheating amongst its students. Refer to the *Academic Integrity* Policy.

9. Assessment Appeals

Students can appeal an assessment decision after the issuing of results. Any request for a review of results must be submitted in writing within 14 days of the date of issuance of results; after that time no further review of results will be entered into or considered.

The request will be overseen by the VET Training Manager, who may decide (according to the nature of the review request) to refer for re-assessment.

Students will be advised of the course of action and will be notified of the outcome of the review in writing within 14 working days.

10. Assessment Modes

Assessment in the Vocational Education & Training sector is largely competency based. Assessment Tasks are typically assessed as either 'Competent' or 'Not Yet Competent.' However, in addition to this, Photography Studies College (Melbourne) employs a graded assessment practice in some courses. In order to be eligible to be awarded a full qualification students must be deemed Competent for all Units of Competency.

10a.   Assessment of Competency

Competent: A student who successfully completes all of the Assessment Tasks in a Unit of Competency to the standard of performance required is assessed as 'Competent'. This is recorded in the student management system and printed on their Statement of Attainment and/or Record of Results.

Not Yet Competent: A student who does not successfully complete all of the assignments (assessment tasks) to the standard of performance required for a Unit of Competency is assessed as 'Not Yet Competent' which is similarly recorded and printed on the Statement of Attainment and/or Record of Results.

In the case of qualifications which have been assessed using this mode, the following legend will be affixed to the reverse of the Statement of Attainment and/or Record of Results for units of competence or qualifications.

C	Competent
NYC	Not Yet Competent

In the case of qualifications which have been assessed using a graded assessment mode, the above legend will be also used in addition to the Photography Studies College Grading Table (refer below).

10b. Graded Assessments

Assessment

Graded assessments are evidence based and carried out in accordance to criteria set out in the Assessment Tasks; each criterion representing a clear division of 100/100.

Grading is determined in accordance with the Photography Studies College (Melbourne) Grading Table:

Unit Grade		%	Level
HD	High Distinction	80 – 100	Excellent
DI	Distinction	70 – 79	Very Good
CR	Credit	60 – 69	Good
PA	Pass	50	Satisfactory
UP	Ungraded Pass	50	Satisfactory
F	Fail	0 – 49	Unsatisfactory
FNS	Did not Submit	0	Did not submit any work for assessment to be regarded as fail
SWR	Supplementary Work Required #	40 - 49	Discretionary grade – further submission required by due date in order to be considered for a pass grade
WH	Withheld Result *	-	Normally granted due to unresolved academic or administrative situations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning *	-	Credit has been granted for previous study in another course or an exemption has been granted resulting from the provision of satisfactory evidence
			Transition Arrangements Category
CT	Credit Transfer *	-	Granted to students who have successfully completed a recognized equivalent unit or subject from an AQF course/program **OR** Granted to students who have successfully completed the required transition arrangements and/or bridging program

			equivalent to a specified unit or subject from an AQF course/program

Temporary grade only – will revert to F if no (or unsatisfactory) submission is received.

* No mark is recorded with this grade.

Assessment of Units of Competency may include a number of weighted Assessment Tasks. To pass a Unit of Competency all Assessment Tasks need to be completed satisfactorily. Results are recorded in the student management system and printed on their Statement of Attainment and/or Record of Results.

SWR Result: The allocation of this result is when the trainer/assessor considers that, if given the opportunity, and with extra effort, the student may be able to achieve competence. Students are then eligible to submit supplementary work in an attempt to achieve this.

Supplementary Work Requirements: Students who receive an **SWR grade** may be required to undertake supplementary work to successfully pass a Unit of Competency. Supplementary work must be received by the date set as shown on the Supplementary Work Requirements form. For a student to be eligible for a Supplementary Work Requirement grade, the initial submission must have been submitted by the due date. Supplementary work, if and when completed satisfactorily, will be assessed as an Ungraded Pass result.

Eligibility for SWR: This is at the discretion of the trainer/assessor, and the requirements are to be entered on the Supplementary Work Requirement form with an appropriate due date. Only one SWR submission is allowed for any subject in each assessment cycle and re-assessments from SWR can only be assessed as an Ungraded Pass result.

10c. Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning is done in accordance to Photography Studies College (Melbourne)'s RPL and Credit Transfer Policy:

RPL and/or credit transfer can be applied for by supplying evidence of:

- prior photographic experience in a broad range of photographic fields
- formal learning – full or partial attainment of a recognised AQF Qualification.
- Informal learning – for example evidence of experience and skills gained through employment and/or voluntary work (in a broad range of photography related fields)
- non-formal learning - for example: evidence of professional development / extensive workshop/seminar and/or conference participation).

RPL credits are only granted for complete Units of Competency and not parts thereof. Applicants will be asked to supply documentary evidence that demonstrates they have the required skills and knowledge to be successfully judged as competent. This evidence will be measured against what is set out by the Unit of Competency by an appropriate assessor/s. Further evidence may be required, or an interview requested by the assessor.

11. Submission of Work for Assessment

The requirements for submission of Assessment Tasks for each Unit of Competency will be outlined in the Learner Guide and made available on the Learner Management System. All submission requirements are detailed in the Learner Guide and Assessment Guide, and all submissions are uploaded to the Learner Management System as evidence of submission and for assessment. Students make a declaration that the work is their own prior to submission via the Learner Management System.

12. Eligibility for Qualification

Students must successfully complete and be assessed as Competent for all Units of Competency of a VET course to be eligible for the qualification undertaken.

Related Documentation

Policies

Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure (for Academic and Non-Academic Matters)
Student Progress and Exclusion
RPL and Credit Transfer
Course Completion and Graduation
Records Management
Student Records Management
Support for Students Policy

Procedures, Forms & Documents

Training and Assessment Manual
Student Handbook
Supplementary Work Requirement Form
Application for Extension
Assessment Submission Cover Sheet
Assessment Moderation Form
Statement of Attainment
Record of Results
Student Grievance, Complaints and Misconduct Register

Publishing details