

# Using other parties to collect assessment evidence

## Introduction

To inform a judgement about whether a learner has achieved **competency**, a registered training organisation (RTO) must gather a range of evidence of the learner's competence. This evidence is gathered from a variety of sources in accordance with the RTO's strategies for training and assessment.

The evidence is then assessed to determine whether an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed in the relevant endorsed unit of competency or module.

Assessment of evidence, and judgement about competency, must be undertaken by a person who meets the specific requirements for **an assessor** in the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*.

In some cases, an assessor cannot directly gather all the required evidence that supports a competency judgement. In these cases, the evidence may be gathered or reported by other people. This type of evidence is categorised as **supplementary evidence**.

This fact sheet provides information about clause 1.8 of the *Standards for RTOs 2015*. For further information on assessment and clause 1.8 requirements please refer to the [Users' Guide to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015](#).

## What is evidence?

**Evidence** is information which, when matched against a unit of competency or module, provides proof of competency.

Evidence can take many forms and be gathered from a number of sources.

## Forms of evidence

Evidence can be categorised as direct, indirect or supplementary evidence:

- **Direct evidence** is evidence that can be observed or witnessed by the assessor. This could include observation of workplace performance, oral questioning, demonstration, challenge test

- **Indirect evidence** is evidence of a candidate'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 evidence** is additional evidence presented to assessors to support a candidate's claim of competence. This could include reports from supervisors, colleagues and/or clients, testimonials from employers, work diaries, evidence of training.

It is important to understand that when it comes to assessment, there is no 'hierarchy of evidence'. While training packages and accredited courses describe the outcomes of assessment and provide advice about the scope and context for assessment, neither the *Standards for RTOs 2015* nor training product guidelines prescribe exactly what type of evidence, or how much evidence, must be collected.

Rather, your RTO must reach an appropriate balance and ensure that, overall; the evidence collected meets the rules of evidence:

- **validity**—the evidence presented demonstrates the learner has the skills, knowledge and attributes as described in the module or unit of competency and associated assessment requirements
- **sufficiency**—the quality, quantity and relevance of evidence presented enables a judgement to be made of a learner's competency
- **currency**—the evidence presented is from either the present or the very recent past, and
- **authenticity**—the evidence presented for assessment is the learner's own work.

It is the **quality of all evidence collected** (including any supplementary evidence collected by another party) that is important to making a sound judgement about competence—rather than the quantity, type and form of evidence, where it was collected or who collected it.

## When and why might an assessor use other parties to collect evidence?

Involving another party in the collection of evidence allows assessors to gather authentic and valid evidence in difficult circumstances in a cost-effective way.

It is common to use another party for evidence-gathering in cases where workplace evidence is required, but where it is not possible for the assessor to directly observe the learner at work. For example, in cases where:

- the presence of an observer may compromise workplace safety, or
- where work activities involve issues of patient confidentiality and privacy.

The use of other people in collecting evidence is also a valuable strategy for collecting evidence of 'everyday performance' rather than performance carried out as part of the formal assessment process.

## How is this different from a co-assessment arrangement?

Using another party to collect evidence that will contribute to a pool of evidence is not the same as a 'co-assessment' arrangement, in which an assessor and another party work together to conduct assessment.

If an agreement has been reached with another party to collect evidence to complement other evidence gathered by the assessor, it is still the role of the **assessor** to make the judgement about whether competency has been achieved.

Under clauses 1.13 and 1.14 of the *Standards for RTOs 2015*, training and assessment must only be delivered by persons who have relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed; current industry skills; and current knowledge and skill in vocational training and learning; along with training and assessment qualifications as specified in Schedule 1 of the *Standards for RTOs 2015*.

It is acceptable under these clauses for an appropriately qualified trainer and assessor to work with an industry expert to conduct assessment and for the industry expert to be involved in the assessment judgement. Under such a 'co-assessment' arrangement, an industry expert, who has the relevant vocational competencies and has current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment being provided, but who may not have the appropriate training and assessor competencies, works alongside a trainer and/or assessor to conduct the assessment. The judgement about whether competency has been achieved is made by both parties together.

It is expected that, where such a co-assessment arrangement exists, there is some form of agreement in place to facilitate the arrangement and to describe each party's relevant roles and responsibilities. However, this type of arrangement does not constitute a third party arrangement as described in clauses 2.3 and 2.4 of the *Standards for RTOs 2015*, because the final assessment decision is made by the assessor working for the RTO.

## What to consider when using evidence collected by other parties

Your RTO should first determine that it is appropriate to involve another party in the collection of evidence.

You must then ensure the assessment processes lead to the collection of quality evidence. You must provide sufficient guidance to both assessors and the other party by:

- **Providing assessors with comprehensive guidance about selecting the best person/s to collect evidence:** The appropriate person to observe or report on the performance of the learner is someone who is in a position to make a valid comment on the learner's performance, for example, a line manager.

- **Providing quality materials for collecting evidence:** These materials must seek/solicit/allow for feedback that is directly related to the relevant unit(s) of competency or module on the learner's performance, without necessarily replicating the performance criteria
- **Providing the other party with comprehensive information about their role in the evidence-gathering process:** This includes providing clear guidance and instruction on when, how, how often and over what period of time the evidence is to be collected. The materials must explain the form in which the evidence is to be collected—for example, a structured supervisor report or an observation checklist that clearly identifies what is observed or performed.
- **Obtaining confirmation that the other party understands their role in the process:** This should include confirmation that the other party has agreed to participate in the evidence-gathering process and that they understand when and how to collect evidence.
- **'Interpreting' training package and accredited course information to be relevant to the other party:** Units of competency and modules describe work outcomes. Each of these units/modules describes:
  - > a specific work activity
  - > the conditions under which this work activity is conducted, and
  - > the evidence that may/must be gathered in order to determine whether the activity is being performed in a competent manner.

Training package information is written to guide assessors and the language is sometimes complex. Therefore, the behaviours and/or knowledge that the other party is being asked to collect evidence of must be 'interpreted'.

The 'interpreted' information should describe how a competent worker would perform the task described by the unit. This may include describing how a competent worker might meet standards in effect in the workplace (for example, standards relating to the speed or amount of work to be undertaken or other quality measures).

- **Setting requirements for assessors in confirming the authenticity of evidence provided by a candidate:** That is, setting requirements for assessors to confirm that evidence is the candidate's own work. Where another party is involved in the collection of evidence, there should be instructions for assessors on how to verify this evidence to ensure it is a true and accurate reflection of the candidate's skills.

## Case study 1

XBC Training Pty Ltd is delivering the *RII30313 Certificate III in Underground Metalliferous Mining* to a group of students in rural NSW.

A number of units in that qualification require demonstration of specific skills in a real workplace, such as underground mines (e.g. RIIBHD302D Conduct underground development drilling), on more than one occasion.

Due to cost constraints of sending assessors to the mines, as well as safety considerations, assessors cannot go underground to observe candidates. The RTO decides to use the mine supervisors to collect evidence that candidates can perform certain tasks as required by the units selected. The supervisors are not making any assessment decisions, nor are they involved in a co-assessment arrangement. They are simply collecting evidence because they are in a position to observe the candidates more than once, in a real workplace setting.

The RTO develops a Supervisors' Guide that explains to the supervisors what their role is. The Guide also includes information on the tasks that have to be demonstrated by the candidates, as well as when the supervisor should observe, and over what period.

The RTO also provides an observation checklist for each task, with clear instructions to the supervisor on time allowance for the task, and performance expectations.

The checklists include specific observable behaviours that the supervisor can comment on, with additional space for free commentary along with student and supervisor signatures.

The RTO verifies the authenticity of this evidence with an interview with the supervisor once all tasks are completed and the checklists collected.

## Case study 2

AKY Training is delivering *CHC30113 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care*.

A number of the units in the qualification require demonstrated evidence that the candidate has performed certain tasks in a regulated education and care service, on more than one occasion.

The candidates undertake 20 hours of work placement a week over a 6 week period. While the assessor visits the candidate on a number of occasions to conduct observation assessments and knowledge testing, and the candidates are also required to submit a portfolio of evidence based on workplace projects they undertake, the RTO supplements this evidence with reports from the workplace supervisors.

The supervisors are briefed about their role at an initial meeting. They are also given written information about the units of competency that make up the qualification, as well as the various tasks the candidate has to perform while on work placement.

The supervisors are asked to complete a fortnightly report. Each report includes questions that relate to a cluster of units being worked on by the student in that fortnight.

The questions in the supervisor's report elicit responses in regards to the number and ages of children the candidate provided care to in that time period, the number of families the candidate interacted with, and the activities the candidate performed. It requires the supervisors to provide examples of where they have observed the candidate using certain identified skills, and how well they performed relative to what is normally required in the workplace. The skills outlined in the report are derived from the performance evidence described in the Assessment Requirements for each unit in the cluster, but are paraphrased so that the supervisors can understand what is expected and what they are commenting on.

At the next meeting the assessor talks to the supervisor about the report, and clarifies any statements made. Where insufficient or unclear information is provided by the supervisor, the assessor clarifies with the supervisor. The additional information gathered via this interview is transcribed onto the supervisor report. The candidate also has an opportunity to discuss the supervisor findings with the assessor. Based on the supervisor's comments, the assessor may ask additional questions of the candidate to clarify the findings, or to seek additional information that is then used towards making a final judgement.

The RTO keeps copies of the supervisors' reports, along with the candidate's portfolio evidence and the completed assessor checklists. All items are scanned and saved into electronic format.

## More information

For further information about ASQA, visit the [ASQA website](#).

If you have questions about the information in this fact sheet, email [enquiries@asqa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@asqa.gov.au), or call the **ASQA Info line** on **1300 701 801**.

The Info line operates from 9.00 am to 7.00 pm, EST, Monday to Friday.

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<sup>i</sup> *Training Package assessment materials kit*, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2001, p. 41.