

confidence
Maximising assessment
decision-making approaches
current assurance quality
assessment decision future
quality Maximising confidence
approaches strategies
assessment decision-making

Maximising confidence in assessment decision-making

Current approaches and future strategies for quality assurance



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Executive summary

The research for this project was conducted from December 1999 through to November 2000. This project is about the need for strategies to improve the quality of assessment. Much of the research and recommended strategies from this project informed a series of guides developed by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) to provide assessors with a range of practical tools and resources for improving assessment practices.

In July 2001 the Australian Quality Training Framework focussed on assessment by strengthening the requirements of registered training organisations regarding their assessment processes and systems. The framework absorbed the National Assessment Principles, recognising that assessment must be valid, reliable, fair and flexible. New requirements have been placed on assessors and registered training organisations to achieve these principles.

This research project identified a range of strategies for validating assessment and identified critical areas where strategies are essential to increase assessor confidence. An extensive review of the literature was conducted, revealing that all research recommended the strengthening of quality assurance as a principal strategy for improving the assessment process.

While there is extensive literature on validity, reliability and moderation in educational testing, particularly in the United States, there is limited material on strategies for quality assuring assessment in a competency-based environment. The systems in the United Kingdom and New Zealand offered a range of options that have some applicability to the Australian VET environment.

The review of the literature reveals that Australian information on possible models and working examples is relatively limited. However, eight models have been drawn that have the potential to be used by individual or groups of assessors within a registered training organisation to support improved assessment practice and decision-making (see p.28).

In addition to this report, a resource for assessors and training provider managers was also developed, called *Maximising confidence in assessment decision-making: Resource kit for assessors*. This is available at <www.ncver.edu.au/research/proj/nr9029.pdf>.

Preface

There have been significant developments in the vocational education and training (VET) sector in the areas of quality assurance and consistency of assessment since the completion of this research.

The research for this project was conducted from December 1999 through to November 2000. This project and a number of other recent national research projects with a focus on assessment have influenced policy-makers in the sector as they have highlighted the concern felt by assessors, VET managers and researchers about the need for strategies to improve the quality of assessment.

In July 2001 the Australian Quality Training Framework focussed the VET sector's attention on assessment by strengthening the requirements of registered training organisations regarding their assessment processes and systems. The framework has absorbed the National Assessment Principles, recognising that assessment must be valid, reliable, fair and flexible. There are now new requirements placed on assessors and registered training organisations to achieve these principles.

A number of sections in the framework deal specifically with assessment and include the registered training organisations' requirement to develop assessment strategies 'in consultation with enterprises/industry' (ANTA 2001) and to validate assessment strategies. Section 9.2 states:

The RTO [registered training organisation] must validate its assessment strategies by:

- (i) Reviewing, comparing and evaluating the assessment process, tools and evidence contributing to judgements made by a range of assessors against the same competency standards**, at least annually; and
- (ii) Documenting any action taken to improve the quality and consistency of assessment.

Note: ** These may be internal processes with stakeholder involvement or external validations with other providers and/or stakeholders

Assessors consulted in this research agreed that assessment validation was the most viable means of achieving quality, consistency and improving the confidence of assessors. Validation was also seen as a major hurdle for the majority of registered training organisations.

The need to comply with Australian Quality Training Framework standards moves assessment validation from 'good to do' to an essential requirement for training providers. Perhaps this shift to compliance will have an impact on improving assessors' confidence. It will be interesting to see whether assessors report that their confidence in assessment decision-making has changed over the next two years as the framework is implemented.

Resources to assist assessors

The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) has managed several initiatives to improve the quality of assessment and facilitate the implementation of training packages. One of these projects, the Training Package Materials Project, involved the development of a series of ten guides to provide assessors and managers of assessment processes within the VET sector with a range of practical tools and resources for improving assessment practices. Members of the research team from the Maximising Confidence in Assessment Project collaborated on a number of the guides in the ANTA products. Much of the research and recommended strategies from this project have informed the development of the guides.

Introduction

Rationale for the project

The purpose of this research project was to investigate the critical factors that impact on the confidence of assessors in making assessment judgements. The project grew from concern being voiced by assessors and registered training organisations about consistency in assessment decisions. For mutual recognition of qualifications to work successfully between registered training organisations, there needs to be widespread confidence in the consistency of assessment decisions.

Assessment against competency standards involves collecting evidence and then forming a judgement about whether or not competency has been achieved. Several factors impact on these judgements, including the skill and experience of assessors and the clarity of the particular competency standards themselves, and these can influence the assessment decisions made.

This research project identified a range of strategies for validating assessment currently being used by assessors in training providers, and identified critical areas where strategies are essential to increase assessor confidence. In addition to this report on the research process and findings, a resource kit for assessors and managers in registered training organisations was also developed as part of the project.

The resource kit includes a set of recommended strategies for registered training organisations to assist them with the quality assurance aspects of assessment. This was developed from material collected as part of the research project and based on recommendations made by practitioners consulted during the research.

Definition of terms

The definitions for quality assurance, verification process and validation process provided in the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (ANTA 1998) were used in the project issues paper and at workshops during the project consultation process. Participants at the workshops agreed that these definitions should be the ones adopted for this project. Definitions of terms used in the project are provided in the literature review.

Terminology

With the introduction of the Australian Qualifications Training Framework, there has been a change in the terminology used to describe some assessment quality assurance processes. 'Assessment validation' has been adopted as the term describing the processes a registered training organisation needs to put in place to ensure the quality and consistency of its assessment. While undertaking this project, the team used definitions for assessment validation and assessment verification from the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (ANTA 1998). However, these definitions have now been subsumed under the one term, validation, and these changes in terminology can be seen in the report and project resources. A set of materials has been developed from this research as a kit to assist assessors.

While there is no absolute definition of the term ‘confidence’, for this project it represents a sense of trust in the quality of the information provided to learners, the validity of assessment tools, and the reliability and fairness of assessment procedures. It also involves the sufficiency of evidence, correctness of the interpretation, and the accuracy of the recording and reporting of assessment results.

Research questions

The research questions addressed by the project are:

- ✧ What factors contribute to the development of confidence in assessment decision-making?
- ✧ What strategies are assessors using to ensure that their judgements of competence are valid, fair and reliable, and based on the collection of sufficient evidence?
- ✧ What strategies are registered training organisations using to support the verification and validation of assessment?

Literature review

Introduction

Until 2001, the national principles, standards and operating protocols that comprised the Australian Recognition Framework were seen as sufficient to maintain the quality of assessment in registered training organisations delivering vocational education and training. These measures included:

- ✧ national core standards for registration
- ✧ national product/service standards governing the capacity to conduct assessment which met requirements of training packages
- ✧ national operational protocol for an external review process involving the validation of the registered training organisations' internal monitoring/review arrangements
- ✧ national training packages consisting of assessment guidelines which included an assessment system overview, assessor qualifications and training, guidelines for designing assessment resources, guidelines for conducting assessment, and sources of information on assessment
- ✧ professional development
- ✧ national Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training that also outlined the responsibilities of training providers in the quality assurance of assessment.

All these measures were designed to support quality assessment and maintain consistent training outcomes. Consistency specifically relates to the comparability of results for learners who are assessed in a range of contexts by a variety of assessors against the same competencies. The emphasis on consistency is deemed to be critical as it forms the basis for the mutual recognition of VET qualifications.

VET assessment under review

The credibility of the VET system, however, was brought into question by a series of reviews at both national and state levels (Schofield 1999a, 1999b; Smith 2000; ANTA 2000a, 2000b). These studies brought to the forefront a range of concerns about the general quality of assessment across the VET sector. In particular, it was noted that the National Assessment Principles, standards and protocols provided under the Australian Recognition Framework were insufficient to ensure the quality or consistency of either the assessment processes or the judgements being made by assessors.

In their 2000 submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Quality of Vocational Education and Training in Australia, Business Skills Victoria suggested:

Anecdotal evidence is increasingly being provided to BSV [Business Skills Victoria] that many enterprises are concerned about the reliability and validity of assessments performed by RTOs [registered training organisations] in the workplace. Some of these concerns are caused by a lack of familiarity with assessment as a model which can lead to credentialling but also the concerns are caused by assessment processes which are 'tick box' and with apparently insufficient mechanisms to ensure adequate evidence has been collected. Moderation and/or

validation of a percentage of assessments by an external expert would build the credibility and quality of the assessment process. (Business Skills Victoria 2000)

This was but one of many submissions to the Senate Inquiry which queried the quality of existing assessment practice and outcomes. These submissions, when combined with the findings of the investigations conducted by Schofield, Smith and others, confirmed that there were serious limitations in the audit process that formed the basis for quality assurance in the national system. It also indicated significant deficits in the expertise of many VET assessors.

By 2000, concerns about the quality of assessment saw the generation of a strategic evaluation by ANTA to look at consistency across all VET jurisdictions. This review again found broad-ranging concerns about the nature and quality of assessment being conducted in the VET sector. Some major factors were identified as influencing the consistency of VET assessment. These included the ineffectiveness of audit to improve assessment, concerns about the quality and extent of training being undertaken by VET assessors and the level of their technical expertise, and the lack of rigorous quality assurance within registered training organisations.

Limitations of the external audit process

Reviews of the system revealed that the quality assurance arrangements in the Australian Recognition Framework were very much placed at the front-end of the system. This was due to the focus on registration of training providers, the way that assessors were initially trained, and the provision of standardised assessment information via the assessment guidelines within training packages. As Schofield (1999b) identified, there was no systematic approach to checking the outcomes of training to determine the achievement of the designated standards (p.52).

Smith (2000) also stated his misgivings about the effectiveness of the audit process as a quality assurance mechanism. He suggested that with such an over-emphasis on record-keeping and other physical evidence—rather than a more rigorous evaluation of assessment procedures, practices and judgements—the desired outcome of a quality assured assessment system under the Australian Recognition Framework was not being achieved. Those interviewed for Smith's study highlighted the need for a process of review or moderation to enhance the consistency of assessment approaches, the processes of assessment and the final judgements about learner competence.

While audit was not seen to be an effective way of improving the situation, a strategy was devised that would help in generating consistent assessment practice. This involved checking assessment instruments, processes and the ultimate decisions being made by assessors.

The belief is that a moderation system would not only set, propagate and check assessment standards but would also facilitate the sharing of 'good practice' approaches to assessment across the system. (Smith 2000, p.16)

Tower, Bloch and Harvey (1999), however, had already offered a warning about placing too much faith in regulatory processes and standardised information and procedures to achieve greater national consistency. They suggested that highly skilled assessors, who could undertake their tasks with confidence, were essential to the achievement of more positive training outcomes (p.2)

Deficits in assessor expertise

The level of expertise required to carry out assessment in vocational education and training has been well acknowledged. VET assessment demands a substantial amount of tacit knowledge and judgement on the part of assessors and a considerable degree of responsibility is entailed in making judgements about learner performance (Jones 1999; Docking 1997). Poor judgements about learner competence ultimately have significant consequences for the credibility of the VET system (Fechner & Hill 1997).

As Docking suggested:

The implications of getting the judgement incorrect, however, are also likely to be significant. The dangers of incompetent assessment go far beyond the classroom and can impact on a person's whole life and can harm their future clients or employers. (Docking 1997, p.19)

Given the findings of the reviews, there was extensive evidence to indicate that deficits existed in assessor expertise. Many of these were the result of ineffective initial training, a lack of ongoing support or professional development, and neglecting whether assessors' technical skills were up to date.

In conducting a review of the competency standards for assessment and workplace trainers, Gillis, Griffin, Trembath and Ling (1998) noted the lack of rigour and quality assurance in the training of workplace trainers and assessors as major concerns. They commented that such training 'was demonstrated to be inadequate in a significant number of settings' (p.185). In his Queensland study, Smith confirmed this view of pre-service training programs, and commented on what he called a 'pervasive and deep concern' in relation to assessor expertise (p.10).

It was reported that VET assessors training frequently is conducted by people who have no expertise in assessment beyond the level of the course they are conducting, and so lack the capacity to significantly lever quality assessment into the system. (Smith 2000, p.11)

Consultants reporting on outcomes of the scoping study for the national assessment initiative recommended to the National Quality Training Council that a range of issues be considered in the review of the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training. Most focussed on the skills and qualifications required by assessors in light of the introduction of training packages. One critical suggestion was:

... the inclusion of units of competency within the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (BSZ98) that address the skill requirements for assessors to engage in Assessment Review or moderation/verification practices. (ANTA 2000a, p.38)

In addition to concerns registered about initial assessor training, the dearth of ongoing support for assessors was consistently raised as a major issue in a large number of studies (Docking 1997; Gillis, Griffin, Trembath & Ling 1998; Dickson & Bloch 1999; Tower, Bloch & Harvey 1999). In her recommendation to the Tasmanian Accreditation and Recognition Committee, Schofield acknowledged the problem and proposed the development of an 'assessors' forum' to maintain their skills. It was indicated that:

This Forum should explicitly foster greater professionalism and ethical practice in workplace assessment and a climate conducive to self-regulation by encouraging assessors to:

- ✧ share assessment strategies and tools
- ✧ participate in voluntary assessment moderation activities; and
- ✧ consider and create best practice examples of workplace assessment.

(Schofield 1999a, p.xii)

The strategic evaluation of consistency in assessment confirmed that there was a need to enhance both the initial and ongoing training of assessors. It was also suggested that assessors needed better advice on the gathering and evaluation of evidence and quality exemplar assessment materials to support better and more confident decision-making (ANTA 2000b).

It was apparent from these studies that inconsistencies in assessment practice, limitations in assessor training and the lack of ongoing professional development were having an influence upon assessment outcomes. When combined with ineffective quality assurance processes, these issues were likely to have a detrimental effect on the confidence of all stakeholders involved in vocational education and training.

Quality assurance of assessment

The Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training states that quality assurance mechanisms are an integral part of any system (p.136). Quality assurance 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.

(ANTA 1998, p.136)

Consistency is absolutely central to this concept of quality assurance, because it is recognised that assessment judgements are made on the basis of assessor experience or tacit knowledge of their technical domain (Jones 1999). Assessors are using internalised models of competence to determine the quality of learner performance, and not all assessors perceive competence in a similar way (Bloch, Clayton & Favero 1995). Given these circumstances, it is crucial that a system of checks and balances be put into place to protect both the assessors and key stakeholders in the process.

A framework for a comprehensive quality assurance strategy for a VET assessment system was established by Toop, Gibb and Worsnop (1994). The mechanisms they proposed included the screening and training of assessors, verification of assessment decisions, appeals mechanisms and processes, and a review of the assessment system. These strategies were extended to some degree by Alexander, who listed four criteria for quality assurance. These included the use of qualified assessors; an established validation, feedback, appeals and verification process; industry-endorsed assessment guidelines; and the provision of industry audit of the assessment process (cited in Docking 1997, p.11).

Gillis, Griffin, Trembath & Ling (1998) suggested that at the system level, quality assurance mechanisms can and should be integrated in a number of ways. They proposed a range of strategies to improve the consistency of VET assessment. These included closer adherence to assessment guidelines and greater use of resources contained in the nationally endorsed training packages, and monitoring and auditing training organisations through the registration process. Other strategies involved quality assurance processes at the assessment system level (inside training providers), quality assurance processes at the assessment experience level, and enhanced initial training of assessors followed by ongoing support and development (p.2.12-2.28).

Each of the frameworks entailed elements of both quality assurance and quality control. As Maxwell (2001) suggested, the 'feed-forward' approach of quality assurance sets in place clearly defined procedures designed to generate the desired outcomes, while the 'feed-back' or quality control components are more designed to measure whether the outcomes are themselves acceptable (p.3).

Strategies for quality assuring assessment

As described by Gillis, Griffin, Trembath and Ling (1998), the quality assurance processes at assessment system level and assessment experience level include moderation, verification and validation.

Moderation

Interestingly, while the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training regularly mentions the term 'moderation', no definition of the term is included in the glossary. Maxwell defines the term as:

... a particular process of quality control involving the monitoring and approval of assessment procedures and judgements to ensure there is consistency in the interpretation and application of the performance standards.

(Maxwell 2001, p.3)

Thus, by moderating assessments, it is possible to identify the inaccurate application of standards or other inconsistencies in approach across a number of assessors (Foyster 1995).

Approaches to moderation include statistical, visitation, and group or consensus moderation. The latter approach involves groups of assessors meeting to discuss assessment procedures, processes and decisions in order to identify anomalies or confirm the consistent application of standards across a range of assessments made by the group. This generally necessitates a process of sampling which may include:

- ✧ selecting a sample of each candidate's performance for further consideration
- ✧ selecting all the work of a sample of candidates
- ✧ a combination of the above.

For Foyster, consensus moderation in particular has the added advantage of building the confidence of assessors because it provides an opportunity for professional development and a more consistent understanding of the processes and benchmarks required. The advantages of shared understanding of standards, evidence requirements and sufficiency of evidence were also highlighted in the ANTA strategic evaluation of consistency of VET assessment (ANTA 2000b).

However, some warnings about moderation are evident in the literature. In reporting on an English research project looking at moderation, Radnor and Shaw commented:

... these processes of moderation are problematic not only in technical and logistic terms, but also because they raise issues of power-sharing ... They also raise issues of dignity, and professional self-respect, of involvement in decision-making, of skill and training, of the confidence teachers have in their own judgement, and of the lack of agreed and tested principles and working models, as opposed to generalized, well-intentioned official statements. (Radnor & Shaw 1995, p.27)

Further, Foyster (1995) suggests that unless there is a formal system in place used by all in the same manner, there is no point attempting moderation at all. Moderation is a process that involves the measurement of assessors' judgements against a standard and, as such, is dependent on social interaction between assessors. Thus, a formal process needs to be set in place in order to resolve differences of opinion that may arise (p.7).

Verification

The Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training defines the process of verification as 'the means of ensuring that the assessment decision is consistent and reliable. The process may involve having another assessor(s) confirm the assessment decisions'(ANTA 1998, p.137).

In the United Kingdom, the term verification is defined by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority as:

... one aspect of quality assurance which relates to the day-to-day delivery of the NVQs [National Vocational Qualifications], rather than the quality assurance of the system as a whole. It is the process of monitoring assessment practice to ensure that assessment decisions are consistently accurate. (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 1999, p.2)

Gillis, Griffin, Trembath and Ling (1998) present a much more complex definition for the process. For them, verification entails the adjustment of assessment decisions against external criteria, with the goal of achieving consistent interpretation and application of standards. Furthermore, they contend that a verification process achieves uniformity when those involved work towards a common understanding and usage of concepts, terminology and application. This definition fits quite comfortably with that of 'moderation'.

Toop, Gibb and Worsnop (1994) suggest that 'verification' is the term used to describe the checks and balances in the assessment system. Its primary purpose is quality assurance and it has the potential to enable users to have confidence in the system and the certification that results from it.

Verification may occur before, during, and after an assessment, while moderation is the main verification process which happens after the assessment is made. The procedures which Toop, Gibb and Worsnop suggest can be included in each of these stages are set out in table 1.

Table 1: Timing and procedures involved in verification

Timing	Procedures
Before assessment	<p>Assessment centres having to demonstrate they have the required facilities and equipment</p> <p>Assessors meeting established criteria to qualify as assessors including expertise in occupational area, expertise in process of assessment and availability to assess</p> <p>Reviewing written materials which are given to candidates</p> <p>Conducting trials of assessment materials before their widespread use</p>
During assessment	<p>Using more than one assessor</p> <p>Assessors exchanging a selection of evidence and reassessing other materials independently</p> <p>Sampling by internal or local verifiers</p> <p>Sampling by external verifiers</p>
After assessment	<p>Statistical monitoring of awards</p> <p>Moderating instruments</p>

Validation

The Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training defines validation as:

... a process to ensure assessment tools, procedures and decision criteria lead to a correct decision when used to assess competency. The process may involve having both technical and assessment specialists review the assessment tools and procedures for validity.

(ANTA 1998, p.137)

Until the revision of the Australian Recognition Framework, 'validation' tended to be used interchangeably with 'verification' and, whilst the training package defined the process, it provided no guidance on the activities that validation might have entailed.

Black (1993) supports the concepts inherent in the above definition and suggests that the scrutiny of assessment tools is a particularly important aspect of any quality assurance process, especially if it is a participatory activity among a range of assessors. However, he believes that the principle of evaluating assessment tools as a matter of course is even more vital than the review process.

The language of quality assurance

The definitions provided for moderation, verification and validation reveal that there are considerable contradictions and confusion in the language associated with quality assurance of competency-based assessment. Interchangeable terminology and definitions with multiple meanings do little to support consistency in processes, procedures and decision-making. Such terminology requires clarification and consistent usage if practitioners and policy-makers are to establish mutual understandings about assessment.

Quality assurance models

Quality assurance strategies are in place in both the United Kingdom and New Zealand VET systems. The mechanisms employed in the monitoring of training outcomes in both countries include both the 'feed-forward' and 'feed-back' components described by Maxwell (2001). However, the extent and rigour in the review process differ considerably between the two countries.

The National Vocational Qualifications model

In the United Kingdom, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority contends that effective quality assurance is the critical element in building consistency and confidence in National Vocational Qualifications (National Council for Vocational Qualifications 1997a, 1997b). As a consequence of this emphasis on quality assurance, a highly regulated approach to assessment in National Vocational Qualifications has been developed.

Within the National Vocational Qualifications system, a dual layer of monitoring makes up the quality assurance strategy, and entails internal and external verification. The *Awarding Bodies' Common Accord 1997* provides the guidelines for quality arrangements in the system, while *Implementing the National Standards for Verification* sets out clearly how the national standards for assessment and verification units are to be assessed and verified.

All training centres delivering National Vocational Qualifications are required to undergo registration and, as part of this process, must be able to demonstrate their capacity to undertake assessment. They are also required to implement rigorous moderation procedures to monitor and evaluate all aspects of their own assessment. The specific elements of this process of internal verification include:

- ✧ monitoring the conduct of assessment
- ✧ sampling of candidate evidence to verify assessment decisions
- ✧ assuring the quality of the systems and procedures used for assessment and verification
- ✧ provision of support and advice for assessors
- ✧ maintenance of assessment and verification records to allow analysis by the centres delivering the training and the awarding body.

(National Council for Vocational Qualifications 1997b)

According to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority requirements, individuals nominated to undertake the role of internal verifier within a centre are required to ensure that assessors and their assessment practice meet both the awarding body's criteria and the national standards for assessment. They are also expected to provide feedback to assessors in the centre, and ensure that verification and assessment records are completed and deal with disputes (National Council for Vocational Qualifications 1997b, p.10)

External verifiers determine whether the quality of both assessment and verification meets national standards. The external verification process begins when external verifiers meet with internal verifiers, assessors and candidates to help establish the key points in the assessment and recording process. External verifiers undertake sampling and check the record-keeping system with the centres.

The system in the United Kingdom is centralised and highly regulated. Studies by Black (1993), Eraut (1994), Lester (1996, 1997, 1999) and Konrad (1999) highlight some of the critical issues and concerns that they have with the approach adopted for assessment of National Vocational Qualifications. In particular, they focus on the *quality control* nature of the United Kingdom system which includes increasing external monitoring and standardisation. Lester (1996) believes that the solution to consistent high quality assessment outcomes is not one of quality control, but rather quality assurance. He suggests that the solution primarily rests with the ongoing professional development of the people conducting the assessment of National Vocational Qualifications. Lester considers that increasing the quality control measures is bound to ultimately have detrimental outcomes.

The result is likely to be that while public confidence is increased, validity suffers as assessment increasingly concentrates on factors which are amenable to checks and controls.

(Lester 1996, p.3)

More specifically, Konrad (1999) suggests that the complex nature of the role of internal verifier is often under-resourced and those carrying out this task have barely adequate initial education and training to undertake the activities effectively.

Confirming this view, Eraut (1994) comments that regulation alone will not achieve the desired outcomes of a quality assured assessment system and that a greater focus on building the skills and knowledge of assessors is likely to have greater impact. He offers the following comment:

Evidence suggests that once established by training and regular communication, a community of assessors is able to ensure sufficiently standard use of criteria; but that it is easy for standardization to slip if training and communication are not regularly maintained. The training of assessors and verifiers is another essential component of quality assurance, because assessment and verification are themselves professional processes requiring special expertise.

(Eraut 1994, p.207)

The New Zealand model

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority adopts a somewhat less rigorous approach in implementing the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, and its quality assurance strategy is underpinned by the Principles of Best Practice Moderation. These principles assert that best practice moderation occurs when it is based on partnerships between assessors and other assessors, and also assessors and moderators. In addition, it needs to be ongoing, as well as an evolving and educative process for assessors and moderators (New Zealand Qualifications Authority 2001).

Unit standards are established by standards-setting bodies, providers are registered and assessment materials are offered in some industry sectors by the relevant industry training organisation. There are also unit standards for assessment, and it must be conducted by those who have completed the appropriate training.

The main quality assurance mechanisms employed concentrate on moderation and audit of registered private providers and approved government training establishments. Thus, much of the emphasis is placed on monitoring the assessment processes and judgements after assessment has been completed.

Industry is actively involved in the moderation process. Assessments conducted against unit standards that are drawn from specific industry sectors are moderated through processes established by the relevant industry training organisations.

Importantly, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority requires providers of training to develop their own quality assurance systems. However, all unit standards set requirements for moderation, and training providers and standard-setting bodies are responsible for ensuring that assessors participate in the designated process for ensuring validity and consistency in assessment.

The process of review is set out in moderation action plans, which provide the framework for evaluating all aspects of assessment. These plans include information on the key roles of people involved in the moderation process, the unit standards to be moderated in a particular year, and the funding of the moderation process. Other information involves the proportion of candidate assessments to be moderated in a particular year, the frequency of moderation, moderation record-keeping requirements, and the approaches for dealing with any non-compliance with moderation procedures (<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/>).

Most moderation procedures established by the industry training organisations include provision for both internal, interprovider, and national moderation. Internal moderation, like internal verification in the National Vocational Qualifications system in the United Kingdom, is focussed on achieving consistency between assessors judging against the same unit standard in an organisation. Consensus or group moderation is the major mechanism employed to ascertain the accuracy and comparability of assessment decisions across a range of training organisations.

Interprovider moderation involves a training provider linking with another provider offering similar vocational courses and levels of training to conduct a review of assessment processes and evaluate judgements on a sample of student work (New Zealand Qualifications Authority 2001). Additionally, national networking of subject moderators and evaluation of assessment systems at the time of accreditation and re-accreditation is designed to assure the quality, consistency and credibility of assessment of national qualifications.

The approach adopted by New Zealand, however, is one that is highly dependent on resources being made available to support the system of monitoring and evaluation. Thus, Maxwell suggests, opportunities for assessors to network to develop real consensus are actually quite limited (2001, p.26).

Conclusion

A number of research projects and reviews of the delivery of vocational education and training in Australia revealed major problems with the conduct of assessment in the sector. Despite the National Assessment Principles, the standards and the operating protocols provided by the Australian Recognition Framework, consistency and quality were recognised as problematic. With limited quality assurance and questionable levels of assessor expertise, questions were raised about the value of the qualifications generated within the VET system. The confidence of key stakeholders, including assessors, was also seen to be quite low.

All research and reviews recommended the strengthening of quality assurance as the principal strategy for improving the quality and consistency of assessment processes, assessment tools and assessment decision-making. The systems in both the United Kingdom and New Zealand offer a range of options that have some application to the Australian VET environment.

It is apparent, however, that the implementation of a broad-ranging quality assurance and quality control regime will not in itself generate the improvements required. As Smith suggests:

... the achievement of assessment quality requires an integrated package of initiatives: relevant and practice-oriented pre-service and professional development training; a combination of both progressive ('formative') and summative assessment; a genuine 'team' effort between professional trainers and appropriate industry/employer representatives; on-going research into, and dissemination of, best practice; clearly defined standards for both initial and on-going 'registration' as a trainer (as distinct from a training organisation); and an effective system of moderation and audit. Unless all of these components are addressed in an integrated fashion, quality of assessment is unlikely to be achieved. (Smith 2000, p.29)

Methodology

Research methods used

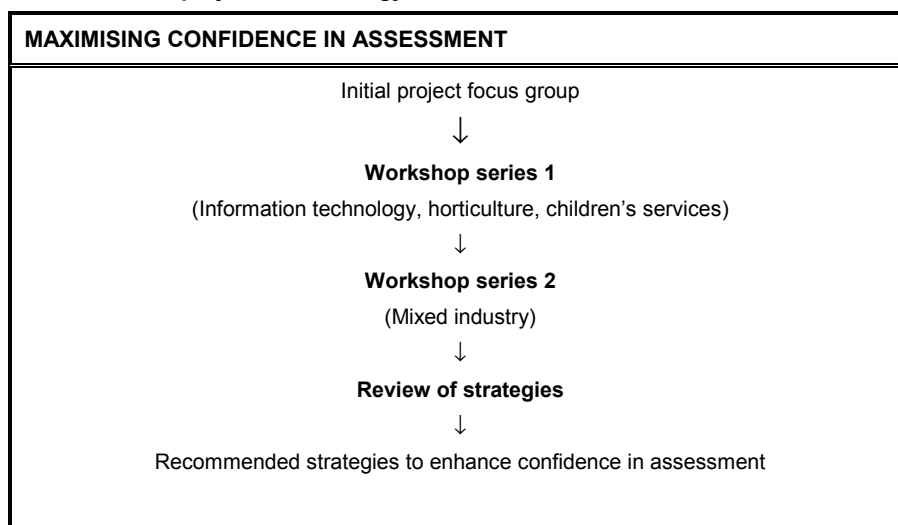
The methodology for this research project was designed as an iterative process with models and strategies for the validation and verification of assessment being presented to practitioners during a series of workshops. An issues paper was prepared for use in the project workshops. This paper is included as appendix 1, and highlights relevant sections of the literature review and the areas of concern identified by an initial project focus group. The project workshops were designed to collect data on existing quality assurance strategies within registered training organisations, and identify potential strategies and models which could be adopted by other training providers to increase confidence in assessment decision-making.

Initially, possible models and strategies to increase confidence in assessment were sourced from the review of the literature. These were then refined through several stages of input from workshop participants resulting in a set of recommended strategies, guidelines and scenarios for registered training organisations designed to assist with quality assurance of assessment systems and processes.

Six project workshops were held to gather data from practitioners about the range of strategies that training providers had in place to assure the quality of their assessment systems. This process consisted of two series of workshops with three workshops in each series. The workshops were designed using a participative model so that assessors could establish common ground, search for workable strategies and develop creative solutions.

Following the data collection and strategy development process that occurred in both series of workshops, the strategies developed were reviewed and refined as resource materials for assessors and registered training organisations. This resource material included strategies identified as appropriate to assure quality in assessment, models and case studies, for implementation by assessors and training providers. These resources were distributed to a range of assessors and organisation representatives for comment, and final revisions were then made.

Figure 1: Overview of project methodology



Summary of focus groups and workshops

Initial project focus group

An initial project focus group was held in Sydney in November 1999. Participants raised issues they believed to be impacting on the quality of assessment and the confidence of assessors and others in the VET sector. These issues can be grouped as:

- ✧ the lack of consistency in assessment decisions and practice
- ✧ the new demands placed on assessors and assessment with the implementation of training packages
- ✧ the lack of rigorous quality assurance processes
- ✧ concerns about the quality of assessor training programs and ongoing support for assessors.

These identified issues were used as a framework for the collection of material from registered training organisations and practitioners during the project.

The project literature review was completed. This review provided information about the range of existing registered training organisation strategies relating to quality assurance of assessment both in Australia and internationally. Strategies identified in the literature review were used in the development of project material.

Workshops

The format of the two series of workshops was similar and consisted of two major areas of focus. Firstly, workshop participants provided feedback on how their organisations addressed a range of areas impacting on the quality of assessment. Secondly, participants provided feedback on a collection of strategies put together by the project team as possible quality assurance strategies that training providers could adopt to increase assessor confidence.

Selection of workshop participants

Registered training organisations in the selected industry areas of study (horticulture, information technology and children's services) were targeted to nominate representatives. Representatives from these organisations, who regularly assess or supervise the assessment process and would be

able to provide an overview of their organisation’s assessment policies and approach, were asked to participate in project workshops.

State industry training advisory bodies and state training authorities provided details of suitable registered training organisation representatives and assessors from a range of states to invite to the workshops. Workshop participants thus included representatives from private and public sector training providers, group training companies and industry training advisory bodies. Participants also had experience assessing in a range of different contexts including enterprises and VET in Schools. They included a number of training provider representatives whose responsibility included the establishment and maintenance of registered training organisation quality systems with a focus on assessment. A list of project participants is attached as appendix 2.

Series 1 workshops

Three industry-specific workshops were held in Canberra and Melbourne to gather data from participants on existing strategies for quality assurance of assessment in registered training organisations. Workshop participants were drawn from New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. The following range of organisations was represented in the first series of workshops:

Table 2: Series 1 workshop participants

Organisations	Number of participants
ITAB	3
Public sector RTO	16
Private sector RTO	3
VET in Schools provider	2
Group training organisation	1
State training authority	3
Enterprise RTO	1

Notes: ITAB = industry training advisory body
RTO = registered training organisation

Series 2 workshops

Unlike the first series, the second series of workshops held in Brisbane and Sydney were not industry specific. Each workshop group included a range of participants from the three project industry areas to encourage debate on the wider applicability of the models to a range of industry areas. The following organisations were represented:

Table 3: Series 2 workshop participants

Organisations	Number of participants
Public sector RTO	11
Private sector RTO	13
Group training companies	1
VET in Schools sector	3
State ITAB	1

Notes: RTO = registered training organisation
ITAB = industry training advisory body

Participants at both series of workshops were provided with the project issues paper as background reading and preparation for the workshops. They were also provided with a list of areas of concern that had been identified by the initial focus group as critical for the registered training organisation in the maintenance of assessor confidence. These areas were:

- ✧ registered training organisation assessment policies
- ✧ assessment information provided to learners
- ✧ a documented outline of the assessment process
- ✧ guidelines to assist in the development of assessment tools
- ✧ processes or documentation to support assessors
- ✧ procedures for the review of assessment.

Prior to attending the workshop, participants were asked to gather information about how these areas were handled by their organisation and, where possible, provide examples of existing strategies for discussion. Participants were also asked to provide any other strategies used to help ensure the quality of assessment.

There was consensus among participants at each of the workshops that this list of areas of concern was an accurate representation of the factors impacting on assessor confidence. This confirmed that the initial focus group had been a valuable process in identifying the issues.

Review of methodology

The methodology adopted provided a good opportunity to work with groups of assessors, gather input about their organisation's strategies, and gain feedback about how useful specific strategies would be in improving assessor confidence in their contexts. For these groups to function effectively and allow for input from all participants, numbers needed to be restricted to about 15 per group. At times this created a difficulty in identifying participants from a sufficiently diverse range of organisations and regions. Workshop participants came from different types of registered training organisations and from six different states. However, the sample numbers in each group were so small that it is difficult to say whether they represented the same views as the full range of training providers working in the Australian VET context.

In addition to the participants who attended workshops, the project team interviewed and spoke to over 40 other registered training organisation representatives and assessors, many of whom were referred by workshop members as contributing a significant strategy or process to improve assessor confidence. Some of the additional assessors interviewed provided material for the case studies in *Maximising confidence in assessment decision-making: Resource kit for assessors* (Booth et al. 2002).

Identifying the most appropriate individual in each organisation to attend workshops was sometimes difficult. Full-time assessors who attended had wide knowledge about assessment practices in their registered training organisation, but sometimes did not have a good understanding of areas that related to the assessment system and how it functioned.

Where the workshop participant had a close understanding of their organisation's assessment system, they may not have been familiar with the actual assessment practices. To some extent, these gaps in knowledge were counteracted by giving all workshop participants background reading to prepare them for the tasks they would be undertaking in workshops. They were also provided with a series of areas to research prior to the workshop, so they were able to contribute details of their registered training organisation's practice in the listed areas.

Limitations of the study

At the time this research was conducted, there were differences across states in how state training authorities were conducting compliance audits for training provider registration. This influenced the types of strategies for assessment validation that registered training organisations in those states had established. It would have been beneficial to have included larger numbers of assessors from each state to be able to determine whether there was significant difference in assessment validation strategies in certain areas or industries.

The three industry areas selected for the project were initially chosen because they each had assessors working in a wide range of contexts and geographic locations. It is difficult to generalise as to whether the strategies identified for increasing assessor confidence in these three industries are indicative of what is happening in all industry areas in the VET sector. Many workshop participants were assessed in areas other than the one they were representing at that time, and other participants were familiar with assessment practices in other industry areas in their organisation. Thus, there was incidental input about practices in other industry areas.

Despite these limitations, the study has provided an opportunity to develop thinking about how to assure quality in assessment, particularly with the range of practitioners working in such a variety of assessment contexts.

Factors which contribute to the level of confidence in assessment decision-making

Existing strategies

Existing registered training organisation strategies relating to assessment which impact on assessor confidence and the overall quality of the assessment process are summarised below. This summary was compiled from feedback provided by participants at both series of workshops.

1. Assessment policy

Workshop participants all identified that their registered training organisation had some form of assessment policy, but these policies ranged considerably in content. In addition, there was widespread confusion about what actually constitutes policy. Often there was overlap between assessment policy, procedures and the information provided to candidates. Workshop participants observed that the majority of current registered training organisation assessment policies focus on grievance and appeals processes, but participants felt that assessment policies should contain a code of practice for assessors. There was agreement that an assessment policy should be readily accessible to all assessors in the organisation.

In smaller training providers, there was usually no-one qualified to write policy and very little guidance provided on what should be included. There was widespread agreement about the need to continually review and update assessment policy so that it remains relevant to the organisation's operation.

Participants recommended that broad guidelines for writing assessment policy should be developed. These could include a list of sub-headings and guidelines for registered training organisations regarding the type of information to include when developing policy.

2. Assessment information provided to learners

Most registered training organisations represented by workshop participants provide written information to students about assessment, but often this is general course information rather than relating to assessment specifically. Participants felt that any written information needs to be supported by face-to-face or phone contact to provide students with reassurance if necessary. As students move through the assessment process, they may require more detailed guidelines. A number of participants ensured that both assessors and candidates sign the information as confirmation that they had read and understood it.

Detailed information to candidates is particularly important if the assessment is for recognition purposes. If the course is using flexible delivery, training providers need to develop processes to ensure that students have access to all relevant information as there is often no formal orientation session.

In some states, the registered training organisation compliance audit requires evidence that adequate assessment information has been given to candidates and they have provided proof that they understand the procedure.

3. Documented outline of assessment processes

There was consensus among workshop participants that assessors within registered training organisations need to provide evidence of how they go about the assessment process. In some organisations, decisions on how to group and assess competencies are made centrally. In other cases, these decisions are left to individual assessors. Participants believed that students need to be involved in the process of deciding what form of assessment is used. In addition, they felt it important that quality assurance involves a feedback loop, thus gathering information from candidates about the process.

Workshop participants were generally aware that their organisation had a documented assessment process, but they were not required to keep detailed evidence of candidates having undertaken it (with the exception of those participants from Queensland where this documentation was an audit requirement). An industry training advisory organisation representative from Queensland—currently involved in the state training authority’s audit process—explained that she looks ‘for a trail of what has occurred: how did the assessor make the decision that the candidate is competent, what evidence did they use and were those pieces of evidence tied together in something that was fair, valid, reliable, flexible and consistent?’.

4. Guidelines for assessment tool development

In each of the workshops, there was debate about the merit of having standard assessment tools. There was agreement that where these tools are used, there needs to be flexibility about how they are delivered and assessors should be free to interpret tasks within their own context.

Participants also felt that if standard assessment tools are used, they need to be continuously refined. In some registered training organisations which are delivering statewide training, the development of shared tools has advantages in terms of consistency, and they also need to be flexible enough to be applied in a range of situations. In addition, participants felt that such tools should have benchmarked examples available, preferably with accompanying justification on how and why they meet the competency. Participants agreed that the need for benchmarked assessment materials was particularly important where training providers are working in partnership arrangements with supervisors and managers in workplaces.

There was agreement that if registered training organisations are developing shared assessment tools, they need to provide for industry input into the process. Participants commented that sometimes evidence guides in the training package competency standards provide insufficient detail and this can lead to different interpretations by assessors. Working with industry can help validate the interpretations of the standards made by a training provider.

5. Processes or materials to support assessors

Participants felt that support mechanisms for assessors within registered training organisations exist, but they are generally of an informal nature. Although there was little evidence of established assessment moderation or verification processes set up within these organisations, there was general consensus among workshop participants that such processes can substantially increase assessors’ confidence in their decisions.

Some participants claimed that workplace trainers and assessors are confident in their role as industry experts but often need support when taking on new roles as professional trainers and assessors. They believed mentoring and team support approaches are essential, particularly where the individual is working in isolation in a workplace. Workplace assessors may be uncomfortable in their role when it involves assessment of colleagues, and will need support with this changed role.

6. Procedures for assessment review

There was agreement among participants that assessors within a registered training organisation need to meet face to face, or communicate by phone or email, on a regular basis to work through an assessment validation process. This process requires an agreed structure and may involve some form of moderation as well as a review of the assessment processes and procedures.

Registered training organisation assessment validation practices need to become more widespread and should be developed in a format that will suit the groups of assessors and organisations concerned. The workshops found little evidence of training providers having documented assessment review processes, apart from in Queensland.

Participants acknowledged the value of technology in supporting assessment review processes but felt many assessors were still not comfortable using email or the internet for this purpose. For many, sharing assessment material is still a relatively new process. A workshop participant from a registered training organisation involved in the delivery of training and assessment in horticulture was having considerable success in encouraging teachers to put all their draft teaching programs and assessment materials online. He commented that this had initially been a slow process, as teachers are often reluctant to distribute their material for peer review. Assessors need to have 'a climate of trust' to develop confidence to share in this way.

Focus group members agreed that collecting online resources required a 'sponsor' or 'initiator'. In one case, the success of a process for sharing and reviewing assessment resources online was due to a manager who encouraged and enthused teachers and collected the ideas together. It was particularly relevant for assessors working in information technology to use their technical skills as a means of reviewing their assessments. It was also deemed essential for assessments to be continually reviewed because rapid technological developments lead to changes in interpretation of the standards.

Some of the larger technical and further education (TAFE) registered training organisations conduct a central comparison of certain assessment events that are widely delivered, but this can be a time-consuming process. Reference groups, formed as part of the course review process in TAFE, can also provide valuable industry input into the validity of assessment tools and processes.

Participants felt that seeking feedback from students on the assessment process was often overlooked by training providers, but it was a necessary part of the review process.

7. Ongoing professional development for assessors

Participants agreed that assessors need to maintain currency by conducting assessment on a regular basis. Some industry training advisory bodies have interpreted this as doing two assessments in a six-month period. One state body proposes keeping a register of current industry assessors.

There were discrepancies across industries and states about what constitutes industry experience and currency. Registered training organisations need guidance from their industry training advisory bodies on what experience is required and how they can support assessors in maintaining their industry currency.

Several participants had found taking part in an action-learning process was an ideal way of giving assessors an opportunity to interact and develop a shared understanding of the assessment process. It also allowed assessors to identify further professional development they may need.

Additional feedback from workshop participants

There was discussion about the meaning of ‘consistency’ and agreement that it should not be interpreted as ‘everyone must do the same thing’. Quality assurance depends on the skills and experience of all those who are engaged in the interpretation of competence. According to one of the private providers working in the community services and health area ‘if it is just the trainer in an RTO [registered training organisation] who is making the decision in isolation then there are real problems. The process needs to involve students, workplace personnel and supervisors’.

Participants reiterated the importance of the assessment principles of validity and reliability. They felt that assessors must have a shared understanding of the standard and the basis on which assessment decisions are made, and what constitutes sufficient evidence.

Development of recommended strategies to enhance assessor confidence

Feedback from series 1 workshops

During the series 1 workshops participants worked in facilitated groups, providing feedback on a set of draft strategies. Participants evaluated the strategies in terms of how useful they would be to their own organisations in increasing assessor confidence. Rather than dismissing the models as not useful, participants were asked to comment on how the models could be adapted or elements of them incorporated into other strategies.

Participants also provided valuable information about similar strategies they were aware of, and assessors and registered training organisations who should be contacted as possible sources of good practice case studies.

Development of models for series 2 workshops

The strategies and models listed in table 3 were modified, refined and presented for comment to participants in the second series of workshops. Many participants also circulated the models to other assessors and managers in their organisation and provided additional feedback to the project team.

Despite the different industry and registered training organisation backgrounds of workshop participants, there was general consensus about the degree of usefulness of each of the models presented. Participants were also able to identify additional examples from their organisation or to nominate training providers they knew had developed models in the areas under discussion.

The series two models were compiled by the project team based on feedback gathered during the first series, and consultation with specific assessors and registered training organisations identified as experts in quality assurance assessment issues. Where there was an area of need identified by workshop participants and no existing strategies were available, the project team developed new draft strategies. One such strategy developed by the project team was an assessment validation strategy which all project informants felt was vital for the maintenance of assessor confidence.

Case study examples of how individual training providers had implemented particular strategies were gathered through a series of follow-up face-to-face and telephone interviews with assessors and managers. (These included TAFE NSW, Moreton Institute, Regency Institute of TAFE and Canberra Institute of Technology.) The case studies were included in the resource to illustrate particular strategies and their implementation.

Table 4: Participant feedback on models presented during series 1 workshops

Name and source of model	Recommendation
ANTA self-assessment checklist to determine current competency (ANTA 1998)	Useful. Many assessors may not be aware of it. Include in final product.
Assessing competence on and off the job (Kearney 1997)	Useful description of moderation process. Elements to be included in guidelines for assessment validation.
Example of an auspiced partnership agreement, Stanley Moriss Assessment and Retail (Enterprise Design Associates and TasWRAPS ITAB 1997)	Thorough, detailed example of an agreement. Useful to include in final product.
Moderation (Group) (Foyster 1995)	Incorporate relevant sections into guidelines for RTOs on establishing an internal assessment validation strategy.
Internal moderation arrangements (London Open College Network 2000)	Useful if rewritten for the Australian context. Re-draft.
School of Computing and Information Systems Quality Procedures. Internal moderation. (School of Computing, Engineering and Technology, University of Sunderland 1997)	Inappropriate for Australian VET context. Some sections to be modified and included in an assessment validation strategy.
In moderation—assessment review (New Zealand Qualifications Authority 1999a)	Not useful for Australian context. Locate examples of RTOs assessment review plan.
Sampling (Konrad 1999)	Of interest to larger RTOs. Re-work and include with validation strategies.
Managing the validity and reliability of assessment (Bateman unpublished)	Include an assessment principles checklist in the final product. Other potential sources identified.
TAFE Tasmania—Workplace Learning Services (Material sourced from Enterprise Design Associates and Michelle Harwood, Trans Train, unpublished)	Useful. Redraft, and develop supporting documents.

Notes: NVQ = national vocational qualifications
RTO = registered training organisation

The case studies were structured using a series of suggested sub-headings provided by feedback from assessors in the workshops. The set of questions used in interviews with training providers were:

- ✧ What is the context of the strategy that your RTO [registered training organisation] has developed? (What training package, delivery scope etc.)
- ✧ What is the approach that your RTO has taken? What area in the assessment process does it focus on?
- ✧ What is the value of this approach?

Summary of participant feedback on models presented during series 2 workshops

Series 2 workshop participants were asked to provide feedback on the usefulness and possible modification of a series of eight quality assurance models. These were provided by participants during the first series of workshops or developed by the project team following participant feedback in the earlier workshops.

Participants were provided with background information about each of the models and then worked in groups analysing the strengths of the models. They were encouraged to suggest possible modifications or identify more appropriate examples rather than rejecting the models completely.

Table 5: Summary of feedback on models from series 2 workshop participants

Name/source of model	Description	Feedback/recommendation
<p>Diagnostic assessment tool (Extract from Thomson, Saunders & Foyster 2001)</p>	<p>Diagnostic tool to improve the quality of assessment. Consists of short questionnaire with follow-up material.</p>	<p>Good for reflective thinking and making the assessors think about the tool.</p> <p>Time-consuming for everyday use. Format and bulk of this model may not be appropriate. Include in draft kit for further feedback.</p>
<p>Witness testimony form Key principles for using witness testimony as performance evidence (Centre Undertaking Research in Vocational Education and Training, unpublished)</p>	<p>To be used by an assessor in an RTO when collecting third-party evidence about a candidate. Includes a form to ensure that the witness is aware of all facets of the assessment and collect the evidence.</p>	<p>Potential to create better partnerships when more than one party is involved. Very useful for Australian Qualifications Framework 1, 2 and 3. Form needs to be re-worked with space for qualitative comments. Rename as third-party evidence form. Edit form and include in draft kit for further feedback.</p>
<p>Assessment principles checklist (Vocational Education and Assessment Centre 2001)</p>	<p>Checklist for assessors organised under the assessment principles: validity, reliability, fairness and accessibility, flexibility and cost-effectiveness.</p>	<p>Useful for ongoing assessor professional development or as a self-access checklist used to evaluate assessment design. Useful tool for discussion with staff, for keeping records and accountability or as part of an assessment validation process.</p>
<p>Pre-assessment verification of assessment task (Document developed by project team, unpublished)</p>	<p>To be used as part of an established assessment validation process.</p>	<p>Simple, effective and easy to use. A tool that does verify and give confidence if used consistently. Useful for self-assessment, with a peer or mentor or as part of a verification strategy.</p>
<p>Establishing internal validation processes (Document developed by project team, unpublished)</p>	<p>Draft material for assessors and RTOs about the establishment of internal validation processes to help maintain the quality of assessment.</p>	<p>Useful model. Needs someone to take up the role of a co-ordinator. Could scale down the process for smaller groups/RTOs. Helps promote networking</p> <p>User-friendly, good working document. Validation action plan needs to be re-designed.</p>
<p>Industry validation of assessment (Draft document developed by Department of Horticulture, Canberra Institute of Technology, unpublished)</p>	<p>Draft case study Department of Horticulture, Canberra Institute of Technology. Involved industry in development of assessment methodology to validate assessment processes and documentation.</p>	<p>Idea of a case study and flow chart very useful. Modify and include in draft kit. Need to source other case studies to illustrate a number of the other strategies included in the kit.</p>
<p>Guidelines for the development of assessment instruments (Developed from material supplied by TAFE SA, unpublished)</p>	<p>Material provided by TAFE SA during the first stage of project has been used for these guidelines for assessment tool development.</p>	<p>Useful for awareness-raising, refreshing memory, checking appropriate use of instruments. Can help to encourage use of a greater variety of tasks. There are many versions of this type of resource around. Needs more information about combining assessment activities. Do not include in kit.</p>
<p>Building confidence in witness testimony or third-party evidence (Document developed by project team, unpublished)</p>	<p>Guidelines for assessors in the use of witness testimony or third-party evidence as part of the assessment process.</p>	<p>Useful and succinct. Clarifies the importance of the process. Needs more guidance about when to use witness testimony. Modify and add to draft kit.</p>

Note: RTO = registered training organisation

Recommended resource format

Feedback was provided about the format of the proposed resource. Participants felt the strategies provided would work very well in CDROM format or on a website, so that registered training organisations and assessors could use and customise as needed.

Other recommendations included the need for a table of contents, and a short introduction stating how the resource should be used. Participants also believed it was important to have an

understanding of the intended audience, and stressed the value of implementing quality assurance strategies for assessment. They felt there should be a glossary of terms included with the resource and that some additional case studies to support the models would be useful, particularly in the area of assessment verification.

Development and review of draft resource

The project team drafted a kit of strategies and models to assist registered training organisations and assessors deal with quality issues relating to assessment. This was based on data collected on current strategies and the feedback gathered on proposed models, templates and case studies through workshops and consultation.

The kit of draft resources was circulated for comment to a group of reviewers from a range of selected training providers and diverse industry backgrounds. The group included five representatives from industry areas that had not been represented in the project workshops. Reviewers were asked to complete a feedback sheet to enable easy collation of comments and a number of reviewers were interviewed by phone to collect their feedback.

Reviewers were asked to provide general feedback on the appropriateness of the overall approach used in the kit, and how applicable the resource would be for use by the registered training organisation. Reviewers were also asked to rate how 'user friendly' they found the resource and how the language and design of the document could be improved. Detailed feedback on the content of each section of the kit as well as recommendations for improvement were also sought from reviewers.

The final version of the kit has been organised into three sections, which were considered by those consulted during the research as the most helpful in improving and maintaining assessor quality. These sections are assessment review strategies, gathering evidence, and partnerships and networks. Strategies refined through the research project, short case studies, and templates to support registered training organisations in the implementation of particular strategies have been grouped into these sections. The document has been designed as a resource to cater for the diverse range of training providers currently assessing and awarding a qualification as part of a training package; thus, not all strategies will be relevant to every organisation. The range of strategies included is a reflection of the wide variety of participants involved in the research project.

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Appendix 1

Maximising confidence in assessment decision-making: The issues

This paper has been prepared as part of the first stage of a National Research and Evaluation Committee project entitled Maximising Confidence in Assessment Decision-making: Current Approaches and Future Strategies for Quality Assurance. The contents are designed to provide a basis for discussion by participants involved in the workshops in the next stages of the project.

Brief background to the project

The National Product/Service Standard for Training Delivery TD3 requires registered training organisations to demonstrate that they conduct assessments in accordance with the endorsed components of the training packages they are delivering.

The National Assessment Principles emphasise that assessment is to be conducted within a quality assurance framework. Thus, registered training organisations are required to monitor and evaluate assessment practices within their organisation and within any auspicing arrangements that may be established between enterprises and the organisation.

This emphasis on quality assurance is designed to develop and maintain a sense of confidence in assessment decision-making, because mutual recognition and qualifications are dependent on ready acceptance of the outcomes of the assessment process. Additionally, the introduction of training packages is requiring assessors to work in different ways, in new locations and possibly in partnership with others. Such changes require assessment to be monitored and evaluated to ensure that it remains valid, reliable, fair and credible.

Research questions and outcomes

Some of the research questions that are being addressed by this project are:

- ✧ What factors contribute to the development of confidence in assessment decision-making?
- ✧ What strategies are assessors using to ensure that their judgements of competence are valid, reliable, fair and based on the collection of sufficient evidence?
- ✧ What strategies are registered training organisations using to support the verification and validation of assessment decisions, and how cost-effective are they?
- ✧ What quality assurance mechanisms do assessors, managers and industry training advisory bodies consider essential, particularly with the implementation of training packages?

The objectives of the research are to provide resources to support confident decision-making by assessors in vocational education and training, as well as guidelines and scenarios for the establishment of cost-effective verification and validation strategies for use by assessors. In addition, it aims to formulate strategies for registered training organisations to assure the quality of assessment decisions made by their assessors.

In parallel with this project, two other projects are looking at the technical aspects of validity and consistency in assessment. Researchers working on all projects will maintain contact to ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved.

Definitions

In the initial stage of this research, the definitions for quality assurance, verification process and validation process provided in the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training (ANTA 1998) will be used. They are:

- ✧ *Quality assurance: A planned and systematic process of ensuring that the requirements of the assessment systems, 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.*
- ✧ *Verification process: Is the means of ensuring that the assessment decision is consistent and reliable. The process may involve having another assessor(s) confirm the assessment decisions.*
- ✧ *Validation process: A process to ensure assessment tools, procedures and decision criteria lead to a correct decision when used to assess competency. The process may involve having both technical and assessment specialists review the assessment tools and procedures for validity.*

While there is no absolute definition of the term ‘confidence’, for this project it represents a sense of trust in the quality of the information provided to learners, the validity of assessment tools, and the reliability and fairness of assessment procedures. It also involves the sufficiency of evidence, correctness of the interpretation, and the accuracy of the recording and reporting of assessment results.

The findings so far

The first stage of this project has entailed:

- ✧ a literature review to determine the extent of research undertaken in the area of quality assurance of assessment
- ✧ a focus group of practitioners and managers from a range of registered training organisations with representatives from industry training advisory bodies and group training companies. The role of the participants in this focus group was to find out the issues and concerns associated with making assessment decisions, particularly in the changing environment generated by the introduction of training packages.

What the literature says about approaches to quality assurance in assessment

While there is considerable literature on validity, reliability and moderation in educational testing, particularly in the United States, there is limited material on strategies for quality assuring assessment in a competency-based environment.

International approaches: Central regulation

Some of the most pertinent literature on quality assurance in assessment addresses the approaches adopted in the delivery of vocational education and training in the United Kingdom and New Zealand. Both countries use a centrally directed, regulatory methodology with extensive forms of moderation to ensure quality outcomes.

In the United Kingdom, for example, the *Awarding Bodies’ Common Accord 1997* provides the guidelines for quality assurance arrangements in national vocational qualifications. In addition, *Implementing the National Standards for Assessment and Verification* sets out how the national standards units are to be assessed and verified.

As in Australia, training providers are required to undergo registration and, as part of this process, they must demonstrate their capacity to undertake assessment. In addition, they must implement internal moderation procedures and external verifiers must determine whether the quality of assessment and verification meets national standards. The strategies used to ensure that assessment decisions are valid, fair and consistent across training providers are:

- ✧ visitation moderation
- ✧ sampling of candidate assessments
- ✧ monitoring and evaluation of assessment and verification practice.

The United Kingdom system provides a range of possibly useful strategies for verification and validation of assessment in the Australian VET sector. Some of these will be used as models for examination in this stage of this project. Of particular interest are:

- ✧ *Internal verification of NVQs: A guide for internal verifiers* (National Council for Vocational Qualifications 1997b)
- ✧ internal moderation arrangements (London Open College Network 2000)
- ✧ internal moderation arrangements (School of Computing, Engineering and Technology, University of Sunderland 1997)
- ✧ guidelines for witness testimony and simulations (Scottish Qualifications Authority 1997)
- ✧ support for assessors (National Council for Vocational Qualifications 1997b)
- ✧ quality standards (Konrad 1999).

In examining these models, it is also important to consider research undertaken on the effectiveness of the national vocational qualification/general national vocational qualification quality assurance system in the United Kingdom.

In research undertaken on the delivery of the national vocational qualifications for the agricultural sector, Lester (1999) found that both employers and providers are concerned with assessment decision-making and, in particular, with decisions about competence. Additionally, there appears to be very limited confidence in the quality assurance system. The lack of knowledge and consistency on the part of external verifiers is seen as a particular problem.

In commenting on the review of the United Kingdom system, Lester (1996) emphasises the link between the credibility of national vocational qualifications and quality assessment. He questions whether increasing the level of monitoring, and the use of external verification and standardisation, are likely to ensure quality. He concludes that while there may be a greater sense of public confidence generated by these processes of internal and external verification, validity may be adversely affected because assessment increasingly concentrates on elements which are amenable to checks and controls.

In contrast to the quality control approach, there appears to be considerable support for placing the emphasis on quality assurance and, in particular, focussing the effort on developing the skills and knowledge of assessors (Black 1993; Eraut 1994; Lester 1996). Eraut contends that inconsistencies in assessment decision-making occur despite the fact that detailed criteria are available, simply because the initial training and ongoing support for assessors is neglected. The importance of communication including open and regular discussion and networking are seen to be critical to the development of a 'community of assessors' (Eraut 1994).

Furthermore, there are particular advantages in assessors sharing their assessment and verification experiences. As Black notes:

... if they can focus on problems of interpretation, perhaps through sharing real examples of work or descriptions of contexts, the difficulties of translating written standards into useable criteria can be overcome and a local, if not national comparability will emerge.

(Black 1993, p.5).

In implementing the National Qualifications Framework, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority adopts a somewhat less rigorous approach. It requires training providers to develop their own quality assurance systems. However, all unit standards set requirements for moderation, and training providers and standards-setting bodies are responsible for ensuring that assessors participate in the designated process for ensuring validity and consistency in assessment. Quality assurance strategies include:

- ✧ moderation action plans
- ✧ consensus moderation to determine comparability of assessment decisions across a range of training organisations
- ✧ national networking of subject moderators
- ✧ evaluation of assessment systems at the time of accreditation/re-accreditation.

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority has recently piloted a new assessment review process in schools and this is included as a model for examination in this project. In this example, an assessment review plan is developed for each school, which identifies the subjects to be moderated and the number of assessment tasks and products that will be examined on an annual basis (New Zealand Qualifications Authority 1999b).

Again, the strategies employed in the New Zealand system may provide some insights or guidance on formulating quality assurance approaches in VET sector assessment in Australia.

The Australian approach: An emphasis on policy and self-regulation

Given the deregulated nature of the Australian training system, the concept of a centrally driven regulatory approach—such as that adopted in the United Kingdom or New Zealand—appears to have little application. In the Australian setting, self-regulation is the clear focus of policy underpinning VET delivery and assessment. It would seem more feasible, therefore, to formulate strategies which are capable of being implemented and managed from the ‘bottom-up’, rather than centrally imposed from above.

Despite the existence of a strong policy framework to support quality VET outcomes, however, the literature on competency-based training in the VET sector in recent times has contained considerable comment about the need for quality assurance in assessment (Docking 1998; Gillis, Griffin, Trembath & Ling 1998; Gillis & Bateman 1999; Bateman unpublished). Much of the discussion has centred on concerns about consistency and the need for registered training organisations to incorporate ongoing processes of monitoring and review. This emphasises the obligation that training providers have to implement such procedures under the requirements of the Australian Recognition Framework and the associated National Assessment Principles (ANTA 1998).

Gillis, Griffin, Trembath and Ling (1998) suggest that at the system level, quality assurance mechanisms can and should be built into the VET system in a number of ways. In particular, they identify the following as critical quality assurance mechanisms: the assessment guidelines and additional assessment resources contained in the nationally endorsed training packages, and the monitoring and auditing of training organisations through the registration process.

The same authors also emphasise the need for quality assurance mechanisms at both the organisational and assessment level. At the organisational level, the major components are monitoring and auditing of assessment together with quality training and development of assessors. While at the assessment level, they reinforce the need for moderation and verification of decisions and procedures, mechanisms for appeals and comprehensive record-keeping systems.

Foyster (1995) defines moderation as ‘a fault-correction device designed to achieve improvement at the lowest possible cost’ (p.135). Moderation involves systematically sampling assessment products and outcomes to determine the validity and reliability of the decisions that are made. Foyster

provides an appraisal of the applicability of statistical, visitation and group moderation to a competency-based setting and concludes that each requires a substantial financial commitment.

He also suggests that group moderation, whilst costly, has some benefits in that it encourages the maintenance of standards and the establishment of formal and informal networks which are beneficial to ongoing assessor development.

Bateman (unpublished) stresses the importance of registered training organisations developing appropriate assessment documentation and processes. Formulating policy and strategies to help develop assessment processes, guidelines and instruments will improve the validity and reliability of the assessment outcomes.

Both the documentation and processes constitute an assessment system that requires ongoing evaluation and maintenance. Bateman suggests the continuous improvement cycle for an effective assessment system involves:

- ✧ quality assuring the assessor process and the assessor
- ✧ quality assuring the assessment judgements
- ✧ quality assuring the procedures
- ✧ professional development of assessors.

The Email (1998) project Best Practice Assessment Systems and Processes also identifies the need for senior management support, quality documentation, suitably qualified assessors, and an assessment system that is continuously reviewed and improved.

In a recent review of the literature on competency-based assessment, Gillis and Bateman (1999) nominate strategies for improving the validity and reliability of assessment in the VET sector. The suggestions have particular relevance for individual assessors. They also need to be recognised as important by managers working to set up quality assessment processes within registered training organisations. The requirements are extensive, and decisions about quality versus cost are likely to generate discussion prior to implementation of a number of the activities proposed. Gillis and Bateman state:

Ultimately, the validation of assessment in terms of reliability and validity requires evidence of careful task development, clear and concise assessment criteria against the competency standards, appropriate task administration procedures, and adequate scoring/decision-making rules and recording procedures. (Gillis & Bateman 1999, p.32)

Cost will be a significant factor in the acceptance and implementation of any quality assurance framework by a training provider. The issue of costs of assessment in training packages is the focus of a report undertaken for the Western Australian Department of Training by Docking (1998). He offers some suggestions for improving the quality of assessment while minimising the cost of the process. These include providing training and exemplars on the internet to assist in the development and interpretation of benchmarks for assessment, and the development of assessment tools which can be accessed through an internet-based resource library.

Tower, Bloch and Harvey (1999) suggest that technology such as teleconferences and training provider intranet sites can be used to improve communication between assessors and generate debate about the issues, thus raising the skills and understanding of assessment in the VET sector.

Assessor training programs and consistency and assessor skills have been linked in several reports (Gillis, Griffin, Trembath & Ling 1998; Gillis, Griffin, Catts & Falk 1998). The quality of the assessment process and judgements is very much dependent on the quality of the training that assessors are able to access. In their investigation of summative assessment practices in TAFE NSW, Tower, Bloch and Harvey reinforce this view and note:

... clearly there are no simple answers to improving consistency, however, we need to bear in mind the broader question of how much of the assurance of quality in assessment can be

based on regulation and standardised procedures, as opposed to developing teachers as skilled, confident assessors. (Tower, Bloch & Harvey 1999, p.2)

The review of the literature reveals that Australian information on possible models and working examples is relatively limited. However, the following have been drawn from the literature for examination in this project:

- ✧ self-assessment checklist to determine current competencies (ANTA 1998)
- ✧ self-assessment checklist (Bateman unpublished)
- ✧ strategies to minimise cost and maximise quality (Docking 1998)
- ✧ group moderation (Foyster 1995)
- ✧ validity and reliability checklists (Bateman unpublished).

Each example has the potential to be used by individual or groups of assessors within a registered training organisation to support improved assessment practice and decision-making.

Outcomes from the focus group

A focus group was conducted in Sydney on 16 November. The 25 participants were currently involved in competency-based assessment or in the quality assurance of VET outcomes.

Each participant was provided with a set of questions prior to the day which were designed to provide a framework for the discussions. The questions were:

- ✧ What do you think constitutes quality assessment?
- ✧ What strategies have been used in recent years to assure the quality of assessment decision-making in your own training environment?
- ✧ With the implementation of training packages, how is assessment different?
- ✧ What are the critical issues/aspects relating to assessment decision-making faced by individual teachers/trainers/assessors and RTOs [registered training organisations]

The questions generated considerable debate, and participants raised a number of issues perceived to be having an impact on the quality of assessment and the level of confidence of assessors and others in the VET sector. These issues fall under the following headings:

1. The lack of consistency in assessment decisions and assessment practice.
2. The new demands placed on assessors and assessment with the implementation of training packages.
3. The lack of rigorous quality assurance processes.
4. Concerns about the quality of assessor training programs and ongoing support for assessors.

Each of these is now discussed in greater detail.

1. The lack of consistency in assessment and assessor practice

Participants talked about the inconsistency of approaches to assessment in the VET sector, despite the implementation of national curriculum and competency standards, training packages with assessment guidelines and supporting assessment materials.

They particularly noted that the 'language' of assessment is confusing, leading to an uneven understanding and application of assessment principles and guidelines.

The problem of inconsistency particularly affected the area of mutual recognition, with fears that this would lead to mistrust and a lack of confidence in the assessment decisions being made.

Participants consider inconsistency arises when assessors:

- ✧ are unable to interpret the requirements of competency standards
- ✧ lack currency in the technical domain
- ✧ do not review their assessment processes to determine irregularities
- ✧ do not have the skills to generate assessment tasks which draw on a sufficient range of evidence
- ✧ do not share resources, information and discussions about assessment.

Some good examples of strategies to minimise inconsistency are:

- ✧ developing common assessment tasks
- ✧ using assessment panels
- ✧ providing assessors with assessment kits which guide the process
- ✧ having access to quality assessment tools
- ✧ networking to discuss assessment issues and specific assessment tasks.

The sharing of assessment resources and information is also seen as one way of making assessment more consistent. However, some participants felt that this is problematic in a competitive training environment.

2. The new demands placed on assessors and assessment with the implementation of training packages

Under this heading, issues identified related to specific concerns about assessment in training packages, and trust or confidence in the assessors themselves and other partners in the assessment process.

In relation to training packages, concerns focussed on:

- ✧ how and what underpinning knowledge is to be assessed
- ✧ interpretation of the standards to ensure benchmarks are achieved
- ✧ determining competence in an off-the-job training environment
- ✧ given the stress on work-based assessment, the role and extent of simulation as a method of assessment
- ✧ accessing relevant workplaces and appropriate work tasks for assessment of learners completing training in off-the-job environments
- ✧ provider and industry roles and responsibilities in the assessment and verification of assessment decisions.

Issues of trust and confidence focussed on:

- ✧ the authenticity and ready acceptance of witness testimony/third-party evidence
- ✧ registered training organisation and industry partnerships in assessment
- ✧ the ability and assessment decisions of other assessors
- ✧ the effectiveness of auspicing arrangements
- ✧ personal ability to take on assessment in a range of new locations and contexts
- ✧ the value which employers, industry and other users give to assessment that is undertaken off the job.

Ongoing professional development—which involves working with training packages, networking with other assessors and gaining access to quality assessment tools—is seen as a means of solving

some of these issues. Examples of the experiences of others undertaking assessment in partnership in workplaces will also assist in clarifying some of the problems and how to address them.

3. The lack of rigorous quality assurance processes

Participants acknowledged that various national policies provide direction on the monitoring and review of competency-based assessment in the VET sector. However, they agreed that there is a need for concrete procedures to be put in place by training providers. Some people, however, are concerned about the degree of organisational support likely to be available for quality assessment processes.

The major issues are seen to be:

- ✧ the cost of setting up and maintaining such strategies
- ✧ the appropriate identification of roles and responsibilities for quality assurance when assessment is undertaken in different locations, possibly in a collaborative way
- ✧ the limited understanding and skills that people have of moderation and sampling processes
- ✧ the need for training to support auditing assessment processes and decisions
- ✧ that it is not a job for either individuals or the untrained
- ✧ that it would put considerable stress on already over-worked people within registered training organisations
- ✧ that auditing would have to be performed by external auditors.

However, it is generally agreed that assessment should be a focus when training organisations are audited, especially when strategies for ongoing improvement are an essential component of the national quality system.

Some of the strategies suggested are:

- ✧ developing a simple system within registered training organisations where assessment tools are submitted to someone for scrutiny or review
- ✧ following up on examples of poor assessment practice
- ✧ making assessment a focus of the continuous improvement cycle that training providers are implementing
- ✧ ensuring that when reviews of assessment are completed, feedback is provided.

4. Concerns about the quality of assessor training programs and ongoing support for assessors

Assessor training and the ongoing maintenance and development of assessors' skills were seen as the critical element of any quality assurance system. Selection, initial training and appropriate and ongoing assessor development were covered in the discussions.

A number of participants in the focus group raised concerns about the initial selection and training of assessors. They suggested that assessors should not only be carefully chosen, but also needed to be genuinely interested in undertaking the job.

Assessor training programs are seen as a matter for concern. Examples were given of training programs that are quite short, while others are considerably longer and appear more comprehensive. Participants see such diversity in assessor training as likely to influence the degree of confidence that others have in the quality of the assessment decisions that are made by some assessors. They are also concerned about the equity and industrial relations issues that such variations in assessor qualification may bring.

It is generally agreed that, to be current, assessors need to conduct assessments regularly to ensure that their skills and knowledge are used and constantly developed. If assessors are not assessing regularly, they may need to re-do their training.

At the same time, there was considerable discussion about how difficult it was becoming for off-the-job assessors to access time back in relevant workplaces to maintain their technical skills and knowledge. This is seen as particularly true in TAFE organisations, where there is limited money available for return-to-industry. In contrast, sessional and contract staff are seen as having current industry skills, but less opportunity to build their assessment skills and knowledge through ongoing professional development.

It was noted that the neglect of teacher training and casualisation will undermine all strategies for quality which are put in place.

Focus group participants agreed that a lack of currency in either the technical or assessment domain generates a loss of confidence in the assessment process, and affects employers, industry and other users of the results. The assessors themselves also feel less confident in their abilities.

Workshops, seminars, networking, online help, and re-training can all help assessors. The concept of teaming assessors lacking current technical skills with assessors who are up to date or mentoring assessors was also suggested. These are possible ways of maintaining and enhancing assessor skills, but the cost of such strategies is acknowledged as a problem.

Summary

The Australian Recognition Framework and the quality arrangements in place for all registered training organisations provide the essential framework for ensuring the quality of assessment in the VET sector. Participants in the focus group in the first stage of this project, however, have highlighted a range of issues they see as impacting negatively on assessment and confidence in assessment outcomes. Significant issues include the uncertainty generated by inconsistencies in assessment practice; the new requirements of training packages; the lack of rigorous quality assurance of assessment within training providers, and concerns about initial and ongoing training for assessors.

The literature on moderation and verification processes in the United Kingdom and New Zealand provides a number of models worthy of closer examination, as do some recent research and development activities from within the VET sector itself. The literature also raises some of the same concerns about assessment as those identified by practitioners in the focus group. Questions were asked about how well assessors are being prepared to carry out their role and whether they have the skills and knowledge to develop valid assessment instruments, interpret standards and determine competence. At the same time, the literature provides clear warnings about taking a quality assurance, rather than a quality control, approach when developing strategies to maximise confidence in assessment decision-making. This too requires closer investigation in this project.

Appendix 2

Workshop and focus group participants

Name	Organisation
Pat Alexander	Torrens Valley Institute of TAFE
Susie Allen	TAFE Tasmania
Janice Anderson	Canberra Institute of Technology
Kirsten Bailey	TAFE Tasmania
Sue Blyth	TAFE NSW
John Brereton	University of Melbourne, Burnley
Margaret Broun	NSW Department Education & Training
Jan Brown	Hawkesbury Family Day Care
John Brunskill	
Melissa Cerantola	Northern Group Training Company
Carol Christie	Moreton Institute of TAFE
Marion Clegg	Moreton Institute of TAFE
Debbie Cole	Swinburne University of Technology
Leone Cripps	Network of Community Activities
Jo Crothers	TAFE Tasmania
Tony Dodson	HORTIS, South Australia
Gail Evans	G E Consultancy Pty Ltd
Gill Fergie	Office of Training and Adult Education
Warren Finch	TAFE NSW
Ken Foote	Hunter Valley Group Training Company
Clare Forbes	Swinburne University of Technology
David Frith	TAFE NSW
Shirley Gerrard	Dickson College, Australian Capital Territory
Justine Gerry	Customs Brokers Council of Australia
Dianne Hardman	TAFE Tasmania
Shirley Harring	Australian Child Care Career Options
Marie Healy	Open Learning Institute, DETIR (Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, Queensland)
Carolyn Hildebrand	Brisbane Institute of TAFE
Anne Houghton	Office of Training and Adult Education, Australian Capital Territory
Maureen Imeson	Box Hill TAFE
Bernadette Ioannou	TAFE NSW
Judy Johnston	Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE
Anna Johnston	Lady Gowrie Child Centre
Lyn Jordan	Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE
Maureen Joyce	OTEN–DE (Open Training Education Network–Distance Education)

Name	Organisation
Robyn Knox	The Australian College of Applied Science
Ros Lamprill	TAFE Tasmania Clarence Campus
Sandra Lawrence	Brisbane Institute of TAFE
Peter Le Cornu	Canberra Institute of Technology
Charles Lenard	TAFE NSW
Glenyss Leyne	Rural Training Council of Australia
Helen Lumby	Office of Training and Adult Education, ACT
Jan Macindoe	TAFE NSW
Kathie Mackay	TAFE NSW
Judy Maggiolo	Brisbane Institute of TAFE
Debbie May	NSW WRAPS (Wholesale Retail and Personal Services Industry Training Council)
Louise Mayo	Australian Business Academy
Margaret McCullough	Department of Education and Training
Julie McQueen	MINTRAC (National Meat Industry Training Advisory Council Ltd)
Robyn Monro Miller	Network of Community Activities
Sharon Mills	Darebin Childrens Services (Local Government)
Maria Minasi	Russo Institute
Joy Mitchell	Manufacturing Learning Victoria
Ros Morgan	Chisholm Institute, Victoria
Jan New	Sutherland Shire Council
Sonya Oper	Continuing Education
Elizabeth Owers	Regency Institute of TAFE, South Australia
Louise Strode Penny	Open Learning Institute of TAFE Queensland
Barry Porter	TAFE NSW
Amanda Porter	Sigma Pharmaceuticals
Claire Ralfs	COPE (Centre of Personal Education), Adelaide
Graham Ratcliff	TAFE Tasmania
Natalie Reed	Family Day Care
Rosie Ryan	Chisholm Institute of TAFE
Michael Scutter	Adelaide Institute of TAFE
Jenny Seymour	Canberra Institute of Technology
Sue Shrubb	Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE
Diana Smith	Southern Sydney Institute of TAFE
Brian Spencer	Community Services and Health Industry Training Board Victoria
Judy Swift	Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE
Brian Thomas	TAFE NSW
Judy Thompson	Moreton Institute of TAFE
Belinda Tierney	Northern Group Training Company
Pat Treacy	Lake Ginninderra College, ACT
Leo Van Neuren	Communications Industry Training Advisory Board
Jennie Wallace	Study Group Australia
Tracey Worrall	Queensland Community Services and Health Industry Training Council
Liz Wright	Community Services and Health Industry Training Board, Victoria



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