

Understanding the principles and practices of assessment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1. The function of assessment in learning and development is firstly a way of measuring a students progress.

Assessment is carried out through formative (checks throughout the course), ipsative (to test against previous marks), and/ or summative (at end of course) activities to help the learner see their development whilst allowing the Assessor to give valuable feedback when appropriate. It's purpose is to measure the learners understanding of the subject against the anticipated outcomes set by the criteria. The learners development is typically measured using formative or summative assessment that meets criteria in a fit-for-purpose Assignment and consequently reflects the required standards and performance/ assessment criteria in any given course. The purpose is to monitor development via evidence that can be quantified and used as performance review/ targets/ benchmarking throughout a course. From an Assessors point of view it is essential to ensure that assessment decisions are consistently reviewed and internally/externally verified where possible so as to contribute to the awarding institutions quality assurance and on-going development of best practice.

1. 2 The five key concepts and principles of the assessor, known as scarv are defined by, having sufficient evidence to assess, enusuring the evidence is current and up to date; it is authenticwork done by the candidate, is reliable and valid. This can be obtained in various ways and include documented, audio and visual evidence.

1. 3 It is the Assessors responsibility to plan assessments with the student, make accurate judgements against agreed criteria; record judgements on

approved documentation and to give feedback to the student and ensure this can be remembered using written notes etc.

1. 4 The Assessor should keep records of student details such as registrations and dates of assessments and make these available to IQA/ IV. They should conform to awarding organisations requirements, meet workplace requirements while assessing and be aware of governing bodies policies regarding Health & Safety, COSHH, General Law, Equality to name a few specific to the assessors chosen area. The assessor should apply responsibilities specifically and generically throughout their caseload.

2. 1 An assessor should use different methods while assessing such as observation, oral, Q&A, work product, witness statements and audio and visual and should be aware of the strengths and weaknesses throughout.

For example using the oral method, its strength allows the assessor to cover a broader area, defines if there are any barriers to learning, i. e. language, dyslexia, learning disabilities visual, audio, it allows inclusion of the student to most suit their needs. However on the weaker side the student may lack in confidence, may not be willing to participate, be unprepared, may have impaired hearing to name a few. Whatever methods are used should ensure that the information is sufficient, current, authentic, reliable and valid.

3. 1 Key factors to consider when planning an assessment are, how the student is to be assessed, when and by whom.

3. 2 The benefits of using a holistic approach to assessment are manifold, students may be observed from a distance and are able to continue their

daily tasks unhindered, students can be assessed in the workplace, it can cover more than one unit at any given time.

3. 3 The assessment should last for minimum of one hour and the assessor should write down or record exactly what they see, it is naturally occurring evidence and provides more information than a written test.

3. 4 An assessor should be aware of the types of risks involved in an assessment, be aware of health and safety regulations and should never put themselves at risk ensuring the work environment is safe both for the student and themselves. They should ensure the student can be assessed without interference from outside influences and so be able to collect evidence for the assessment.

3. 5 Risks can be minimised through the planning process by ensuring safeguards are in place such as CRB checks, careful planning Clear criteria for assessment e. g. identifying addressing specific requirements standardisation of planning negotiating with learner selecting appropriate range of assessment methods appropriate to context to generate the required evidence safeguarding learners e. g. planning for health and safety equality and diversity negotiating with learners appropriate timing of assessment clear recording tracking logging of assessment decisions.

4. 1 For the purpose of inclusion the candidate should be made aware and understand the assessment requirements, it should deal with specific needs and be tailored to the candidates learning style. This can be achieved by ensuring the candidate is involved in the aspects of planning relating to their

own subject, understand the terminology and be responsible for their own learning, involve others e. g. managers, colleagues and customers.

4. 2 Sharing information enables the candidate to understand what is expected from them. Different types of information can be gleaned from the awarding organisation, the centre where the assessment is to take place, the assessor and from the candidate themselves. The appeals process should be explained to the candidate on the initial assessment.

4. 3 Peer and self assessment can be used to promote learner involvement and personal responsibility in the assessment of learning, this is important in enabling the learner to become independent and aid the learner to develop the capacity to evaluate their own and others performance.

4. 4 Special requirements should be taken into account for individual learners during the planning process to allow access to assessment. Learning styles should be understood; the environment where the assessment takes place should be suitable in regard to system and staff flexibility. This ensures the candidate is fully included in the process.

5. 1 To judge whether evidence is sufficient, authentic, current and valid the assessor can draw on a number of different methods, these include using a holistic and Q+A approach, asking about regulations and requirements of the awarding organisation, the regulations in their own organisation and relevant national standards and consult with colleagues with experience in assessment. Assessors should check if evidence has met specific criteria identified in the assessment planning, that plagiarism has not taken place,

statements and witness testimonies are credible and trustworthy and work is at the appropriate level.

5. 2 To ensure that assessment decisions made against specified criteria and are valid, reliable and fair, the assessor should identify, discuss and record the assessment plan, be familiar with the units and use appropriate methods of assessment. The reliability of decisions has been confirmed through a standardisation process. Assessors need to be sure that they are being fair by judging all learners according to their evidence against the identified criteria and not against what the assessor thinks they can do or thinks they should do.

6. 1 Effective internal quality assurance is crucial in identifying any risk so that participants have confidence in the assessment process. This can be achieved by ensuring that a candidate in one part of the country is assessed at the same level and under the same criteria as a student in another part of the country. QCF and NVQ qualifications are nationally recognised and need to represent a consistent standard. Awarding organisations are approved by Ofqual and have the responsibility for developing and monitoring quality assurance procedures for their own awards and for providing comprehensive guidance to all centres offering their qualifications. Internal and external quality assurance procedures need to reach consistent standards across a number of centres. This includes clearly identified assessment procedures, record keeping and monitoring of quality.

6. 2 Assessors have two areas of practice, the first is their own vocational subject and the second is lifelong learning and development. As an assessor

you will have to meet requirements for CPD, including updating on national occupational and assessment standards, attend standardisation meetings, keep records according to centre regulations and requirements and know about internal quality assurance, and what happens and when throughout the assessment cycle. An internal verifier should manage the assessor in their organisation and should be sampling all types of assessment decisions, hold regular standardisation sessions where the assessor will have the opportunity to check if they are making the same decisions on evidence as would other assessors. Quantitative and qualitative data from assessors should be made available to internal verifiers on a regular basis to show how an assessor is progressing.

6. 3 When there are disputes concerning assessment, each organisation should have its own complaints and appeals procedure, which the assessor should read and follow. The appeals procedure should be explained to the learner during the initial assessment/ induction. If disputes cannot be resolved locally the awarding organisation will have its own complaints and appeals procedures. An assessor should know and strictly follow the assessment procedures to keep disputes to a minimum; any deviation from the proper procedure could result in disciplinary action against either the assessor or the organisation to which the assessor belongs. To safeguard against this an assessor should not get involved in informal discourse with candidates with no one else present, keep proper written records of what has been said, follow procedures to the letter, make sure all relevant documents are stored for the required time and keep good communication with their verifier.

7. 1 It is important to follow the procedures for the management of information relating to assessment because it is subject to the Data Protection Act 1988. An assessor has responsibilities and could be held responsible for losing a candidates personal data, which could lead to prosecution, all data should be kept safe under lock and key and be kept for a period of three years. Many organisations have developed electronic recording systems where data can be uploaded. Handwritten records must be legible, up to date to track progress and be available for sampling for the internal verifier.

7. 2 Feedback and questioning contribute to the assessment process, the assessor should give constructive feedback, let the candidate have the first say, give praise before criticism, be specific, always end on a positive note make sure the candidate understands and has the time to think before giving a response.

8. 1 Legal issues, policies and procedures relevant to assessment, including those for confidentiality, health, safety and welfare should include, confidentiality where information is kept secure restricting access to assessment information, health and safety, observing the candidate in a safe working environment where all participants take responsibility for reporting any unsafe equipment or practices. The only time an assessor should interfere with an assessment is if they feel either themselves or the candidate is at risk.

Special attention should be given to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, should include equality and diversity and cover CRB checks as this could affect how an assessor carries out assessments.

8. 2 The contribution that technology can make to the assessment process are as follows, the use of mobile phones for recording video and photographic evidence, online initial diagnostic tests, electronic portfolios, digital recording devices such as Dictaphones, online multiple Q+A to test levels of knowledge and understanding of particular topics. Online numeracy and literacy tests indicate which level the candidate is working at. The advantage of this is that results can be accessed immediately and helps strengthen areas where the candidate is weak.

8. 3 Good assessors will ensure a respect for equality and diversity is present in all they do to ensure inclusion. Candidates must have equal access to assessment irrespective of age, gender, religion, ethnic group, disability or geographical location. There can be absolutely no discrimination during this process.

8. 4 The value of reflective practice and continuing professional development in the assessment process ensures the individual is performing at an optimal level, it allows either the assessor or the candidate to think about how they have performed during a specific task, helps them to identify any areas of weakness and how to improve in the future. It shows evidence that the candidate knows and understands what they are doing in practice. It helps to keep a candidates CPD current and underpins professional development.