New Era Institute
Gateway to the Future

Assessment Policy

New Era Institute recognises that assessment is a core service offered to the students and is at the centre of operations as a Registered Training Organisation. Quality assessment ensures that the skills and knowledge of students are assessed using four principal determinants:

- That assessment decisions are based on the assessment of skills and knowledge compared with units of competency drawn from nationally endorsed Training Packages or accredited courses.
- That the target industry (Early Childhood Education and Care) and wider industry (Leadership and Management) requirements are contextualised and integrated within assessments.
- That evidence is gathered that meets the rules of evidence.
- That assessment is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment.

Assessing and mapping the Unit of Competency

New Era Institute uses units of competency drawn from nationally endorsed Training Packages as the primary benchmark for assessment. Supporting these sometimes are industry standards or codes of practice. These and other industry specific publications inform the context and standard of performance during assessment.

In order to identify the precise assessment criteria, New Era Institute applies a methodology of unpacking a unit of competency in order to assess the full scope of the unit including elements of competence, performance evidence, knowledge evidence, foundation skills and the requirements of the evidence conditions. This process ensures that New Era Institute assessment strategies accurately reflect the requirements of the relevant Training Package and are valid. To ensure alignment with all components of a unit of competency, unit mapping must be undertaken during the design and development of assessment. Unit mapping must also be undertaken when carrying out assessment validation.

Unit mapping will show the relationship between the planned assessment activities and each component of the unit. This must be conducted at a micro level of detail to allow the mapping to demonstrate the validity of the assessment. An assessment mapping document is available for this purpose.

Assessment context

New Era Institute recognises the importance of establishing the right context for students during their assessment. Assessment context refers to the physical and non-physical environment in which skills and knowledge are assessed. This may be a workplace such as an office setting or Childcare centres. The non-physical environment refers to things such as workplace policy and procedure, workplace tempo and culture. Many units of competency may be applied in any workplace such as skills and knowledge relating to workplace safety or leadership.

The rules for contextualising:

- The elements and performance criteria cannot be changed.
- Specific industry terminology can be substituted for generic terms in the performance criteria as long as it does not change the competency outcomes.

New Era Institute ensures that students are provided with the right context to undertake their assessment activities. To ensure this, New Era Institute will apply the following strategies:

- Incorporation of the student’s own workplace policies and procedures into the assessment scenario or activity.
- Conduct of the assessment in the student’s workplace performing real workplace tasks where possible.
- Integration of relevant industry codes of practice and other industry information into the assessment activity.
- Incorporation of industry job descriptions for students to align with during realistic simulated workplace scenarios and case studies.
- Provide a realistic simulated workplace within New Era Institute’s facilities where training and assessment is not conducted in the workplace.

While applying these strategies it is important to ensure that in establishing the context for assessment we do not affect the transferability of the unit of competency. When the student is assessed as competent, this also means that the student can transfer the applicable skills and knowledge between different workplaces and contexts. This means that the competency is transferable which is a fundamental element of competency based training and assessment.

Principles of assessment

In the delivery of assessment services, New Era Institute applies the four principles of assessment under Standard One Clause 1.8 of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015. Assessment strategies have been designed to ensure:

Validity.

- A range of assessments tools are used within and in every unit to ensure students demonstrate skills and knowledge across a range of environments and contexts relevant to each unit. Assessing in a variety of contexts shows that the student is able to apply the skills and knowledge in different situations, including practical ways.

- Assessments are designed to match knowledge and skills by using simulated and practical workplace assessment tools that match the assessment requirements.

Reliability.

- To ensure reliability trainers and assessors at New Era Institute will be required to submit a selection of assessments to a second trainer and assessor before the assessment decision is returned to a class of students.

New Era Institute has a well-developed assessment system that:

- Ensures trainer and assessors brief students adequately by using assessor instruction documents. and
- By moderating a selection of assessments submitted by students by another trainer and assessor.
- Where a variation is found a meeting of the assessors will be undertaken to ensure reliability.
- Trainers and assessors will be required to attend a meeting before every study period (term) to discuss training and assessment tools.
- The Assessment Record (marking guide) which includes benchmarking ensures that trainers and assessors make consistent judgements about competence particularly in practical task where variation in the task may occur.

Flexibility.

- New Era Institute ensure that Credit transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning are available to students through its website, on the international student enrolment form, during the enrolment interview and during orientation.

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Fairness.

New Era Institute ensure that Recognition of Prior Learning is available to students through its website, on the international student enrolment form, during the enrolment interview and during orientation.

- Information is provided to students about the assessment and learning process via the website www.newerainstitute.edu.au under courses on brochures and at enrolment, further details are given at orientation.
- During enrolment the student is interviewed and advised about the course that is appropriate to ensure the enrolment is fair. Where the courses at New Era Institute are not appropriate the student is advised of alternate opportunities e.g ELICOS courses.
- Where a student has written difficulties s/he can seek additional help from trainer and assessor and/or Student Support officer at any time to meet competency.
- Students are fully briefed and informed of the assessment process and performance expectations before undertaking assessment.
- When a student is unable to complete the required task to the level described in the assessment requirements support is offered before being reassessed – if the student is not yet competent after two assessment attempts within the same unit a formal New Era Institute intervention strategy supports the student.
- New Era Institute has an appeals policy and that appeals are indicated in the letter of acceptance at enrolment, during the enrolment interview and during orientation.

Collecting evidence that counts – the rules of evidence

From Clause 1.8 of Standard One for Registered Training Organisations (2015) the rules of evidence are applied in the following manner:

In collecting evidence, New Era Institute applies the rules of evidence to inform the assessment strategy. Assessment strategies have been designed to ensure:

Sufficiency.

- New Era Institute ensure that the elements, performance criteria, performance evidence, knowledge evidence and foundation skills for each unit of competence are assessed at least once, but in most instances more than once, to maintain quantity and relevance to meet this rule of evidence.

Validity.

- Evidence gathered has been mapped against the competence being assessed for each unit.
- The assessment tasks have been selected to assess both knowledge and skills in a simulated and practical workplace environment.
- Learning has been presented in both a theoretical and practical manner to ensure that the material relates to both the workplace and the assessment requirements.

Authenticity.

- New Era Institute requires a signed authenticity statement by the student that they certify the work as their own for every written assessment. Some of these assessments will take place within the classroom setting as will the practical workplace simulated assessments.

Currency.

- Credit Transfer should be current as international students enrolled in this course will have gained the units of competence in recent months at another vocational institution after transfer.
- Assessments completed during the course will meet this rule of evidence.

Employers and other parties contributing to assessment evidence

Where industry representatives are engaged to contribute toward assessment evidence, New Era Institute will use a standard approach to collect this evidence. New Era Institute places a high value on the assessment evidence that is gathered by supervisors or employers in the workplace (Childcare Centres). New Era Institute uses the industry evidence (also referred to as third party evidence) as a supplement for the gathering of direct evidence by the workplace assessor.

During the development of assessment tools, trainers and assessors are to ensure that the observation criteria used in industry evidence reports is wholly task orientated. These observation criteria should reflect the tasks that the supervisor would expect to issue to an employee and monitor during normal workplace duties.

Trainers and assessors are to engage with industry representatives directly and collect evidence about a student’s performance through discussion with supervisors. This discussion will be based on observable workplace tasks and evidence is to be recorded by the workplace assessor. These discussions may be undertaken face-to-face or over the phone. The workplace assessor must record the industry representative's details, contact information and the date/time of the engagement.

Recognition of prior learning

New Era Institute will provide all students the opportunity to seek recognition of their prior learning. Recognition of Prior Learning is viewed simply as another method of assessment and therefore is conducted in accordance with this policy. Further information can be found in this manual in the *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy*.

National Recognition (Credit transfer)

New Era Institute will recognise and award national recognition for students presenting with current competence. Where a student is seeking national recognition for a unit of competency that is on New Era Institute scope of registration and the student can provide documentary evidence that the unit has been previously awarded to the student, national recognition will be awarded. Please refer to the *National Recognition Policy* for further guidance.

Competence of trainers and assessors

In accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations, trainers and assessors are required to hold the minimum competencies for training assessment and the vocational competencies at least to the level being assessed. New Era Institute has appropriate systems in place to ensure that all staff members are appropriately qualified to meet the requirement under the Standards for Registered Training Organisations. Further information can be found in this manual within the *Trainer Competency Requirements Policy*.

Assessment validation

Assessment validation is the process where trainers and assessors compare and evaluate their assessment methods, assessment procedures and assessment decisions. New Era Institute will facilitate regular assessment validation opportunities to maintain a quality assessment and to continuously improve assessment strategies. Further information can be found in this manual in the *Assessment Validation Policy*.

Assessment tools

Assessment tools are the means used to gather evidence about a student's competence. New Era Institute have developed assessment tools which support the assessment of applicable units of competency in accordance with the requirements of industry Training Packages. New Era Institute staff members must ensure that tools developed for assessment fit with the requirements of the target industry or wider industry needs.

The following are examples of assessment tools which may be incorporated into an assessment strategy to meet the Training Package and industry requirements, the rules of evidence and the principles of assessment:

- Direct observation checklist of workplace tasks being performed;
- Structured activities (simulation activities) that will lead to the demonstration of workplace tasks;
- Questioning of required knowledge (verbal and/or written);
- Development of a portfolio of evidence which may include samples of work, statements by supervisors;
- Reports and planning documents;
- Role Plays, Presentations, Team Meetings, Interviews, Workplace Inspections for WH&S;
- Workplace feedback (a third party report).
- Workplace templates and
- Journal/logbook

This list of assessment tools identifies only a small number of assessment tools which are available.

Completed assessment tools are to be retained within the student file in accordance with the *Records Retention and Management Policy*.

Assessment information

Assessment information is the information provided to both students and trainers and assessors to guide their conduct of the assessment and the completion of assessment activities. This information is used to draw out a response from a student.

Examples of assessment information include:

- Instructions to set the framework for the activity such as who, what, where, when and how. The expected outcomes of the assessment should be included in these instructions and it is critical that they are straightforward and in line with the student's preparation during learning or through other competency development pathways.

- Scenario information includes information that sets the context for a simulated assessment activity. This may be a simple case study or an in-depth scenario which requires analysis and interpretation. It is important to note that the higher the AQF qualification level, the greater the requirement to analyse and apply cognitive skills to produce workplace outcomes. Scenario information used to support assessment at a Diploma level, for example, should be relatively deep and complex to allow the student to exercise their analytical skills and produce viable workplace products and outcomes.

- Industry information includes items such as codes of practice, policies and procedures, fact sheets, legislation and regulations. Whilst these items may not be provided in hard copy to every student, they will be provided contacts, web sites or hyperlinks to access this information. Electronic copies of industry information are also acceptable.

At New Era Institute, the assessment activities are supported by clear assessment information (1. assessor instructions and 2. student instructions). Ultimately, the quality of assessment outcomes produced by a student will be directly affected by the quality of the information provided at the commencement of the activity and during the assessment process. New Era Institute staff will prepare suitable assessment information for all assessment activities.

Re-assessment

Students who are assessed as not yet competent are to be provided with detailed verbal and written feedback to assist them to identify the gaps in their knowledge and skills to be addressed through further training. These students are to be provided with learning support to target their specific gaps in knowledge and/or skills and prepare them for additional assessment.

It is the policy of New Era Institute to provide two opportunities for re-assessment at no additional cost to the student. Students who require re-assessment after they have exhausted their opportunities will be required to pay a fee for re-assessment. Please refer to the fees and charges policy to identify the re-assessment fee.

- *In competency based assessment, the student will always be offered two (2) re-assessment opportunities as part of the tuition fees for each assessment event during a unit. Students will be charged a fee for any further re-assessments for each assessment event during a unit. This fee is to cover the cost of guiding the student toward competence. The re-assessment service includes individual guidance to prepare the student for the re-assessment.*

New Era Institute Students are offered Learning Support sessions. Appointments can be arranged as individuals and small groups with the Student Support Service. More information on Student Learning Support Services can be found on the New Era Institute website www.newerainstitute.edu.au under the Student Services. Additional support services can be applied well before it becomes necessary to impose an additional fee for re-assessment.

Assessment Procedure

The following procedure is to be applied for conducting assessments:

Step 1: Prepare for assessment. The trainer and assessor is to:

- Review the context and purpose of the evidence to be collected;
- Identify and analyse the units of competency, Training Package and New Era Institute's assessment strategy to identify the evidence requirements; and
- Review the assessment tools and confirm their currency and adequacy in meeting the rules of evidence.
- Prepare the New Era Institute assessment records. Upon completion of assessments, these documents will be scanned and stored electronically by Student Services in individualised student file on the sever. Hard copies are stored in the student file management room.

Step 2: Prepare the student (Briefing). The trainer and assessor meets with the student to:

- Explain the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process;
- Explain the units of competency to be assessed and the evidence to be collected;
- Explain the consequence of not meeting the requirements of the assessment including the 2 re-assessments without additional charges;
- Outline the assessment procedure and the preparation the student should undertake, and answer any questions;
- Outline the specific tasks (in detail) listed within the candidate instructions, Work Placement workbook and observation/demonstration record and how these will be facilitated within their simulated workspace;
- Assess the needs of the student and, where applicable, negotiate reasonable adjustment for assessing People with disabilities without compromising the competency outcomes;
- Seek feedback regarding the student's understanding of the units of competency, evidence requirements and assessment process; and
- Consult with the student concerning the time and place (e.g. workplace or practical) of the assessment; and

- Determine if the student is ready for assessment in the workplace and, in consultation with the student, agree on the schedule for assessment as outlined in the course schedule. (where applicable)

Step 3: Plan and prepare the evidence-gathering process. The trainer and assessor must:

- Establish a plan for gathering sufficient quality evidence about the student's consistent performance in order to make the assessment decision;
- Source or develop assessment materials to assist the evidence-gathering process;
- Organise equipment or resources required to support the evidence-gathering process; and
- Coordinate and brief other personnel involved in the evidence-gathering process.

Step 4: Collect the evidence and make the assessment decision. The trainer and assessor must:

- Establish and monitor the evidence-gathering process to ensure its validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility;
- Collect appropriate evidence and match compatibility to the elements, performance criteria, foundation skills and evidence guide in the relevant units of competency;
- Evaluate evidence in terms of the four dimensions of competency - task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills;
- Incorporate allowable adjustments to the assessment procedure without compromising the integrity of the competencies;
- Evaluate the evidence in terms of validity, consistency, currency, authenticity and sufficiency;
- Consult and work with other trainers and assessors involved in the assessment process;
- Record details of evidence collected; and
- Make a judgement about the student's competence based on the evidence and the relevant unit(s) of competency.

Step 5: Provide feedback on the assessment. The trainer and assessor must provide advice to the student about the outcomes of the assessment process:

- Clear and constructive feedback on the assessment decision using the “assessment record form” ensuring that both the trainer and assessor and the student sign this form as acknowledgement of feedback and Competent or Not Yet Competent of the assessment;
- Information on ways of overcoming any identified gaps in competency revealed by the assessment;
- Information on reassessment and the appeals process if applicable.

Step 6: Store the assessment result. The trainer and assessor must:

- Give the completed student assessment record form and the student written response/s to the assessment (ASQA refer to these records as “*Completed student assessment items*”) to Student Services to scan and store in the student’s file. Attached to the documents is the New Era Institute course spreadsheet recording each student individual assessment result. The trainer and assessor will maintain alphabetical integrity (A-Z) in this step;
- Maintain the confidentiality of the assessment outcome.
- As a minimum: The trainer and assessor’s completed assessment record, (equivalent to a marking schedule) and any observation checklist used for each student may be sufficient where it is not possible to retain the student’s actual work. However, the retained evidence must have enough detail to demonstrate the assessor’s judgement of the student’s performance against the standard required. New Era Institute expects trainers and assessors to exceed this minimum at all time.

Step 7: Participate in the reassessment and appeals process. The trainer and assessor must:

- Provide feedback and counselling to the student, if required, regarding the assessment outcome or process, including guidance on further options;
- Provide the student with information on the reassessment and appeals process;
- Report any assessment decision that is disputed by the student to the management team; and
- Participate in the reassessment or appeal according to Appeals Policy of New Era Institute.

Step 8: Review the assessment process. On completion of the assessment process, the trainer and assessor must:

- Review the assessment process using the Assessment Review Form;
- Report on the positive and negative features of the assessment to the management team raising a *Continuous Improvement Report* or by providing input to the next scheduled assessment validation.

Step 9: **Report units results**. The trainer and assessor must:

- Give Student services the assessment results spreadsheet to enter the unit results in RTO Data (with any pending results and reassessments to be followed up immediately when the reassessment is completed).

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Assessment Process