POLICY TITLE: Assessment

(Vocational Education and Training)

Purpose

To ensure all tutors follow the correct Photography Studies College (Melbourne) procedures when undertaking assessments.

Policy

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

The Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 outlines strict guidelines for **student assessment** and it is important that Photography Studies College (Melbourne) complies with these regulations. This means that all assessing tutors must ensure that all requirements are met. These requirements are all documented in the Photography Studies College (Melbourne) Teachers Handbook.

1. Principles of Assessment

In accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, assessment for all units of the **Advanced Diploma of Photography** utilises the following principles of assessment:

- **Validity,** meaning that the assessment covers the unit/module requirements and can be supported by evidence.

- **Fairness,** meaning that the assessment does not disadvantage anyone or any particular group.

- **Flexibility,** meaning that the assessment reflects student needs and there is opportunity to negotiate certain aspects of the assessment (for example, timing) within the limits of the given assessment requirements.

- **Reliability,** meaning that the assessment is consistent and accurate.

Assessment strategies are designed for each unit to ensure that assessment is a fundamental component of the learning process.

Assessment modes for the Advanced Diploma of Photography vary according to the individual units. Assessment is framed in such a way as to deal with the various learning needs of students. Photography Studies College (Melbourne) will not disadvantage or discriminate against any student on any basis.

To underpin these criteria, Photography Studies College (Melbourne) has developed, the following:

- Clearly set out instructions about the requirements of each assessment task;

- Clearly defined assessment criteria;

- Clear and easy to follow assessment recording tools;

- A defined format to be used by students to submit their assessment tasks;

- A defined format to be used to provide students with feedback about their assessments; and

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

2. Who can Assess

Only teachers who are qualified with the **Certificate IV in Training & Assessment** are permitted to assess student work and any RPL applications submitted.

3. Assessment Methods

Assessment methods include the collection of a broad range of evidence for the assessor to base a decision upon. Assessment methods may include but are not limited to:

- Interview and questioning

- Self reflections

- Assignment/project

- Case study/role play

- Third party verification (eg. mentors/clients)

- Research reports

- Portfolios of evidence and creative work

- Written tasks and presentations

- RPL applications

4. Reasonable Adjustment

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

Assessment processes may be reasonably adjusted for the following:

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

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

- Adjusting the delivery arrangements of the course

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

- Making changes to the assessment arrangements.
- Making changes to the way evidence for assessment is gathered.

5. Information about Assessment

Prior to Assessment: To enable students to prepare appropriately for all assessment requirements, students will be informed of the assessment arrangements for each unit. Information about each assessment is provided at the commencement of each class by issuing the Learner's Guide and the Assessment Tasks. Students are to be provided with advanced advice about the arrangements, context and purpose of all assessment tasks as well as the performance (assessment) criteria against which they are being assessed.

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

It is a guiding pedagogical principle at PSC that assessment is an integral part of the learning process. For this reason all assessment must be returned to students in a timely manner, with feedback that assists them with their learning and enables them to improve their performance.

6. Assessment Validation and Moderation

PSC ensures assessors participate in regular validation and moderation activities to ensure their teaching practices and assessment decisions are:

- consistent between assessors

- valid

- fair

- flexible and reliable

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

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

The central method for validation and moderation of assessment at PSC is through the assessment of the photographic folios that are presented at the conclusion of each study period / semester in the following units:

VU20681 Build creativity in photographic practice

VU20682 Apply creativity in photographic practice

VU20683 Investigate photographic genres

VU20684 Develop personal photographic style

VU20685 Apply specialised photographic practice

BSBPMG510A Manage Projects

These units are culminating units whereby the assessment criteria require them to demonstrate outcomes derived from learning in all the units undertaken in the particular study period/semester.

Each of the folios presented for assessment are subject to panel assessment. Panel assessment involves independent by concurrent assessment by two or more assessors. Records of the meetings and outcomes of Panel assessment are kept by the Administration and Assessment Coordinator and checked off against an annual Moderation and Validation Action plan.

- **Development of a Validation and Moderation Action Plan** - This plan includes when validation and/or moderation meetings occur, how the procedure for validation and/or moderation is conducted, what units of competency are included, what percentage of assessed work is to be scrutinised, what other strategies are used by teachers to support assessment validation.

Validation

Other forms of validation at PSC may include:

- **Undertaking Validation Panel meetings** to provide the opportunity for teachers to:
  - Discuss the assessment methods and tools they have used
  - Discuss the assessment decisions they have made
  - Scrutinise the evidence that has been presented by candidates
  - Check that there has been consistent interpretation of the standards in both the design of the instrument and the judgement made
  - Discuss other aspects of the assessment process
- **Maintaining records** of the validation process and the outcomes as a basis for informing the continuous improvement process of the college
- **Exhibiting current work by students** – for public display throughout the college as exemplars of best practice relevant to each year level.

Moderation

Other forms of assessment moderation at PSC may include any or all of the following:

- **Panel Assessment** (as previously described)
- **External Industry Assessment** – in the final year of their course, each student is required to present their folio to a panel of industry experts
- **Exemplar work by past students** –. Discussion of assessment tasks, with reference to exemplars of responses by previous students to the same or similar tasks in order to clarify task requirements.

Support in decision making – academic and peer support is available as needed for both new and experienced teachers. This is provided by discussion with the Academic Director or Year Level Convenors, through peer mentoring and at the regular Year level meetings.

7. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious matter and PSC has measures in place to detect and prevent plagiarism and cheating amongst its students. Refer to the *Plagiarism* Policy.

8. Assessment Appeals

Students can appeal an assessment decision for up to thirty (30) days after the issuing of results. Assessment appeals can be made using the *Review of Results procedure* or the *Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure (for Academic and Non Academic Matters)*.

9. Assessment of Competence

Assessment in the vocational education & training sector is largely competency based. Assessable tasks are typically assessed as either competent or not yet competent. However in addition to this, PSC has a graded assessment practice. In order to be eligible for an Advanced Diploma of Photography, students must have successfully completed and passed all units as listed for each particular stage.

Competent: A student who successfully completes all of the assignments (assessment tasks) in a unit of competence to the standard of performance required is assessed as 'competent'. This is recorded in the student management system and printed on their academic transcript.

Not Yet Competent: A student who does not successfully complete all of the assignments (assessment tasks) for a unit of competence is assessed as 'not yet competent' which is similarly recorded and printed on the academic transcript.

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

Eligibility for supplementary work requirements is at the discretion of the teacher, and the requirements are to be entered on the Supplementary Work Requirement form with an appropriate due date. Only one SWR submission is allowed for any subject in each assessment cycle and re-assessments from SWR can only be assessed as competent or not yet competent.

Supplementary Work Requirements: Students who receive an **SWR grade** may be required to undertake supplementary work to endeavour to gain competence... Supplementary work must be received by the date set as shown on the Supplementary Work Requirements form. For a student to be eligible for supplementary work the initial submission must have been submitted by the due date. Supplementary work, if and when completed will not be graded according to a performance level.

RPL: Credit has been granted for previous study in another course or an exemption has been granted due to the satisfactory evidence of required competencies. RPL credits are only granted for complete units of competency and not parts thereof.

10. Submission of Work for Assessment

The requirements for submission of work for assessment will be outlined in each learner guide and on miPlace, All submissions are uploaded electronically via the Assessment upload on the PSC Student Portal.

Printed assessment submissions, including folio submissions, require a Photography Studies College (Melbourne) Assessment Submission Cover Sheet.

11. Eligibility for Qualification

Students must successfully complete and be assessed as competent for all units for each year of the course to be eligible for the Advanced Diploma of Photography qualification.

Related Documentation

Policies

Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure (for Academic and Non Academic Matters)
Student Progress and Exclusion
Course Completion and Graduation
Records Management
Student Records Management
Plagiarism Policy

Procedures, Forms & Documents

Teachers Manual
Student Handbook
Supplementary Work Requirement Form
Application for Extension
Assessment Submission Cover Sheet
Results Summary Spreadsheet.
Assessment Moderation Form
Academic Transcript
Plagiarism Register

Publishing details