

POLICY TITLE: Assessment
(Vocational Education and Training)

Purpose

To ensure all trainers/assessors follow the correct Photography Studies College (Melbourne) procedures when undertaking assessments and direct students accordingly.

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 trainers/assessors must ensure that all requirements are met. These requirements are all documented in the Photography Studies College (Melbourne) Teacher Manual.

1. Volume of Learning (Standard 1.1)

The AQF Volume of Learning identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the **learning** outcomes specified for a particular AQF qualification type.

Hours are sourced from the AQF Volume of Learning. All training and assessment practices meet the requirements of VOL. Qualifications are well structured and informed by industry.

Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III*	Certificate IV^	Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Graduate Certificate
0.5 – 1 year	0.5 – 1 year	1 – 2 years	0.5 – 2 years	1 – 2 years	1.5 – 2 years	0.5 – 1 year
600 – 1200 hours	600 – 1200 hours	1200 – 2400 hours	600 – 2400 hours	1200 – 2400 hours	1800 – 2400 hours	600 – 1200 hours

Where applicable, the assessment framework ensures that assessment practices comply with the requirements of Training Plans regarding training and assessment delivery times.

2. Principles of Assessment (Standard 1, Clause 1.1 – 1.4)

In accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, assessment for all units of Photography Studies College (Melbourne) VET courses 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.

Rules of Evidence

Evidence collected by assessors fulfils following requirements:

Validity	The assessor is assured that the learner has the skills, knowledge and attributes as described in the module or unit of competency and associated assessment requirements.
Sufficiency	The assessor is assured that the quality, quantity and relevance of the assessment evidence enables a judgement to be made of a learner's competency.
Authenticity	The assessor is assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the learner's own work.
Currency	The assessor is assured that the assessment evidence demonstrates current competency. This requires the assessment evidence to be from the present or the very recent past.

Assessment tools and strategies are designed for each Module/Unit of Competency to ensure that assessment is a fundamental component of the learning/training process.

Assessment methodologies that Photography Studies College (Melbourne) VET courses utilise vary according to course requirements and the individual Units of Competency. Assessment is framed in such a way as to deal with the various learning/training needs of students. Photography Studies College (Melbourne) will not disadvantage or discriminate against any student on any basis. The two primary modes of assessment are:

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Assessment as part of the training program.

To underpin assessments as part of the training program, Photography Studies College (Melbourne) has developed, the following:

- Clearly set out instructions to students about the requirements of each assessment task: when, where, how long they have, what resources/equipment they need, what resources will be supplied;
- Clearly set out arrangements, context and purpose of each assessment task;
- Clear written instructions to assessors including any special requirements, how much support can be provided, how to record results and store completed tasks;
- 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.

3. Who can Assess

Only trainers/assessors who are qualified with the current TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, or its successor, are permitted to assess student work and any RPL applications submitted.

In addition, trainers/assessors must be able to demonstrate the following:

- the vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed;
- current industry skills directly relevant to the training and assessment being provided, and
- current knowledge and skills in vocational training and learning that informs their training and assessment.

4. Assessment Methods

Assessment methods include the collection of a broad range of evidence for the assessor to base a decision upon.

The following evidence gathering techniques are used in the assessment of units of competency from this course. Assessment methods may include, but are not limited to: (For mapping refer to Training Plan in Appendix One, and Assessment Methodology in Appendix Two)

Key Assessment methods	QUES	Questioning (Written or Verbal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, more applicable to the assessment of knowledge evidence • Assessment could be by written or oral questioning, conducting interviews and questionnaires • Proposals / Reports / Reflections in response to their work
	PROD	Production of an Item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folio project – series of images • Presentation of work in progress • Reports
	PORT	Portfolio of Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A purposeful collection of work samples of annotated and validated pieces of evidence, compiled by the learner • Visual diary - Evidence could include written documents, photographs, videos - this may include planning and mapping of the documentation of creative processes including important decisions, shoots, ideas and failures

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Log books documenting technical processes
	OBSV	Direct Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessed in a simulated off-the-job situation that reflects the workplace – i.e. Studio, Digital lab If not observed, video evidence needs to be presented.
	THRD	Third-party Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentor reports External industry feedback on final body of work Client feedback

All units of the course specify the assessment requirements and conditions.

Types of Evidence

Evidence can take many forms, however Photography Studies College (Melbourne) requires a balance of evidence collection to ensure it meets the rules of evidence.

Direct	is evidence that can be observed or witnessed by the assessor. This could include observation of workplace performance, oral questioning, demonstration, challenge test
Indirect	is evidence of a student's work that can be reviewed or examined by the assessor. This could include finished products, written assignments or tests, or a portfolio of previous work performed.
Supplementary	is additional evidence presented to assessors to support a student's claim of competence. This could include reports from supervisors, colleagues and/or clients, testimonials from employers, work diaries, evidence of training.

5. Reasonable Adjustment

All students enrolling into Photography Studies College (Melbourne) undergo an individual interview where possible issues may be discussed. Some programs require a Pre-Training Review to identify possible learning issues. Once informed of possible learning issues, the Course Director VET Programs is informed

Wherever possible, trainers/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 circumstances¹

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

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

All reasonable adjustments are recorded in a learners file or on their Training Plan if relevant.

Under special circumstances students may apply for an extension for the submission of their assignment work by completing the Application for Extension form no less than 14 days before an Assessment Task is due. The length of an extension will be determined at the discretion of the trainer/assessor and shall be deemed to be lapsed after the completion of the following study period/semester. Any work outstanding after this time will result either as a Fail grade or Not Yet Competent status.

6. 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 verbal and written - 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 Photography Studies College (Melbourne) that assessment is an integral part of the learning/training 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. All assessment results will be returned to students no later than 14 days after receipt.

7. Assessment, Validation and Moderation

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) ensures assessors participate in regular validation and moderation activities to ensure their teaching practices and assessment decisions are:

- consistent between assessors
- valid
- fair

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 trainer/assessor may be required to consider.

- 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 graded assessment at Photography Studies College (Melbourne) is through the assessment of the photographic folios that are presented at the conclusion of each study period/semester. These Units of Competency are culminating units whereby the assessment criteria require students 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 but concurrent assessment by two or more assessors. Records of the meetings and outcomes of Panel assessment are kept by the Panel Chair and tabled at the VET Leadership Team.

The method for validation and moderation of training package courses and training packaged units in accredited courses is through the monitoring of students' progress through their course.

Development of an Assessment 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 trainer/assessors to support assessment validation.

Validation

Forms of validation at Photography Studies College (Melbourne) may include:

- **Undertaking Validation Panel meetings** to provide the opportunity for trainer/assessors 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.
- **Participating in industry programs and partnerships** – such as photography industry awards and internship programs approved by the College.

Moderation

Forms of assessment moderation at Photography Studies College (Melbourne) 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 trainer/assessors. This is provided by discussion with the Course Director VET Programs and/or convener(s), through peer mentoring and during a regular meeting program.

8. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious matter and Photography Studies College (Melbourne) has measures in place to detect and prevent plagiarism and cheating amongst its students. Refer to the *Plagiarism Policy*.

9. Assessment Appeals

Students can appeal an assessment decision after the issuing of results. Any request for a review of results must be submitted in writing within 14 days of the date of issuance of results; after that time no further review of results will be entered into or considered.

The request will be overseen by the Course Director VET Programs, who may decide (according to the nature of the review request) to refer for re-assessment.

Students will be advised of the course of action and will be notified of the outcome of the review in writing within 14 working days.

10. Assessment Modes

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, Photography Studies College (Melbourne) employs a graded assessment practice in some courses. In order to be eligible to be awarded a qualification, students must have successfully completed and passed all Units of Competency as listed for each particular stage, and in accordance to the assessment mode.

10a. Assessment of Competency

Competent: A student who successfully completes all of the assignments (assessment tasks) in a Unit of Competency to the standard of performance required is assessed as 'Competent'. This is recorded in the student management system and printed on their Statement of Attainment and/or Record of Results.

Not Yet Competent: A student who does not successfully complete all of the assignments (assessment tasks) to the standard of performance required for a Unit of Competency is assessed as 'Not Yet Competent' which is similarly recorded and printed on the Statement of Attainment and/or Record of Results.

In the case of qualifications which have been assessed using this mode, the following legend will be affixed to the reverse of the Statement of Attainment and/or Record of Results for units of competence or qualifications.

C	Competent
NYC	Not Yet Competent

In the case of qualifications which have been assessed using a graded assessment mode, the above legend will be also used in addition to the Photography Studies College Grading Table (refer below).

10b. Graded Assessments

Assessment

Graded assessments are evidenced based and carried out in accordance to criteria set out in the Assessment Tasks; each criterion representing a clear division of 100/100.

Grading is determined in accordance with the Photography Studies College (Melbourne) Grading Table:

Unit Grade		%	Level
HD	High Distinction	80 – 100	Excellent
DI	Distinction	70 – 79	Very Good
CR	Credit	60 – 69	Good
PA	Pass	50	Satisfactory
UP	Ungraded Pass	50	Satisfactory
F	Fail	0 – 49	Unsatisfactory
FNS	Did not Submit	0	Did not submit any work for assessment to be regarded as fail
SWR	Supplementary Work Required #	40 - 49	Discretionary grade – further submission required by due date in order to be considered for a pass grade
WH	Withheld Result *	-	Normally granted due to unresolved academic or administrative situations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning *	-	Credit has been granted for previous study in another course or an exemption has been granted resulting from the provision of satisfactory evidence
			Transition Arrangements Category
CT	Credit Transfer *	-	Granted to students who have successfully completed a recognized equivalent unit or subject from an AQF course/program OR Granted to students who have successfully completed the required transition arrangements and/or bridging program equivalent to a specified unit or subject from an AQF course/program

Temporary grade only – will revert to F if no (or unsatisfactory) submission is received.

* No mark is recorded with this grade.

Assessment of Units of Competency may include a number of weighted Assessment Tasks. To pass a Unit of Competency all Assessment Tasks need to be completed satisfactorily. Results are recorded in the student management system and printed on their Statement of Attainment and/or Record of Results.

SWR Result: The allocation of this result is when the trainer/assessor 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.

Supplementary Work Requirements: Students who receive an **SWR grade** may be required to undertake supplementary work to successfully pass a Unit of Competency. Supplementary work must be received by the date set as shown on the Supplementary Work Requirements form. For a student to be eligible for a Supplementary Work Requirement grade, the initial submission must have been submitted by the due date. Supplementary work, if and when completed satisfactorily, will be assessed as an Ungraded Pass result.

Eligibility for SWR: This is at the discretion of the trainer/assessor, 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 an Ungraded Pass result.

10c. Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning is done in accordance to Photography Studies College (Melbourne)'s RPL and Credit Transfer Policy:

RPL and/or credit transfer can be applied for by supplying evidence of:

- prior photographic experience in a broad range of photographic fields
- formal learning – full or partial attainment of a recognised AQF Qualification.
- Informal learning – for example evidence of experience and skills gained through employment and/or voluntary work (in a broad range of photography related fields)
- non-formal learning - for example: evidence of professional development / extensive workshop/seminar and/or conference participation).

RPL credits are only granted for complete Units of Competency and not parts thereof. Applicants will be asked to supply documentary evidence that demonstrates they have the required skills and knowledge to be successfully judged as competent. This evidence will be measured against what is set out by the Unit of Competency by an appropriate assessor/s. Further evidence may be required, or an interview requested by the assessor.

11. Submission of Work for Assessment

The requirements for submission of work for assessment for each Unit of Competency will be outlined in the Learner Guide and made available on the Learner Management System. All submissions requirements are detailed on the Assessment Task/Assignment briefs, and all submissions uploaded through the Learner Management System as evidence of submission and for assessment.

12. Eligibility for Qualification

Students must successfully complete and be assessed as competent for all Units of Competency of a VET course to be eligible for the qualification undertaken.

Related Documentation

Policies

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

Procedures, Forms & Documents

Training and Assessment Manual
Student Handbook
Supplementary Work Requirement Form
Application for Extension
Assessment Submission Cover Sheet
Assessment Moderation Form
Statement of Attainment
Record of Results
Plagiarism Register

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