

## PL\_AC\_005: Assessment Policy for Vocational Education and Training (VET)

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<b>Related Documents</b>		<a href="#">Disability Policy</a> <a href="#">Examination Procedures</a> <a href="#">Requesting a re-mark or re-assessment</a>		
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### 1. Context

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching system and an important aspect of maintaining academic standards. It measures the achievement of competency and formally certifies student achievements for external audiences.

Assessment at THINK is linked to specific competency and based on clearly articulated criteria that help students understand the characteristics of high quality work. It supports student-centred approaches to learning. In keeping with THINK's strongly applied focus to teaching and learning, each vertical endorses relevant diverse forms of assessment primarily drawing on authentic practice.

THINK has an established set of principles that guide learning and teaching within the organisation.

### 2. Definitions

**Assessment:** the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard or level of achievement required within a subject.

**Assessment Moderation:** the process of establishing comparability of standards in student performance so that judgements made of student performance are consistent. The goal of assessment moderation is to assure assessment decisions are valid, reliable, consistent and fair.

**Assessment Validation:** the quality review of the assessment process. It involves checking that assessment tools produce valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgements to be made as to whether the requirements of a course or training package are met. It includes the review of a statistically valid sample of the assessments and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes and acting upon these recommendations.

**Competency:** the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situation and improvements (Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015: User's Guide).

**Disability:** has the same meaning as in [section 4\(1\)](#) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), and includes physical, psychological and psychiatric conditions and injuries, and ongoing medical conditions.

**Formative Assessment:** helps students and staff to identify strengths, weaknesses and ways to improve and enhance student learning. It is intended to support student learning rather than determine a final result.

**Summative Assessment:** evaluates the quality of students' learning, and involves assigning a grade or numerical result based on how effectively students have addressed unit of competency requirements.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all VET courses. All staff must comply with this policy whenever they are engaged in any aspect of the assessment process.

### 4. Principles of Assessment

- **Fairness:** the individual student's needs are considered in the assessment process; where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are applied by THINK to take into account the individual student's needs; THINK informs the student about the assessment process, and provides the student with the opportunity to challenge the result of the assessment and be re-assessed if necessary (refer to sections 8 and 9.2).
- **Flexibility:** assessment is flexible to the individual student by reflecting the student's needs, assessing competencies held by the student no matter how or whether they have been acquired, and drawing from a range of assessment methods and using those that are appropriate to the context, the unit of competency and associated assessment requirements, and the individual.
- **Reliability:** evidence presented for assessment is consistently interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.
- **Validity:** the assessment decision is justified based on the evidence of performance of the individual student. This principle requires:
  - assessment against the unit(s) of competency and the associated assessment requirements covers the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance
  - assessment of knowledge and skills is integrated with their practical application
  - assessment to be based on evidence that demonstrates that a student could demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other similar situations
  - judgement of competence is based on evidence of student performance that is aligned to the unit/s of competency, and associated assessment requirements.

Assessment is designed to develop student learning (formative), to make judgements about student learning relative to stated learning outcomes (summative) and to monitor student learning as a measure of teaching effectiveness. Assessments are to be relevant to the workplace where appropriate and consultation with industry should form part of this process.

The Program Director (or delegate) will provide the appropriate support and instruction to learning facilitators (lecturers) regarding the design, implementation and evaluation of assessments.

Assessment in VET courses is conducted in accordance with the Principles of Assessment and the Rules of Evidence.

### 5. Rules of Evidence

- **Validity:** the assessor is assured that the student 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 enable a judgement to be made of a student's competency.
- **Currency:** the assessor is assured that the assessment evidence demonstrates current competency. This requires assessment evidence to be from the present or the very recent past.
- **Authenticity:** the assessor is assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the student's own work.

### 6. Assessment Validation and Assessment Moderation

Assessment validation and assessment moderation are undertaken as part of THINK's quality assurance and continuous improvement of teaching and learning activities. Assessment validation and assessment moderation activities are undertaken collaboratively, and will involve all staff who deliver and assess the relevant subject. These activities will also be informed by the broader spectrum of external benchmarking activities.

## 6.1 Assessment validation

THINK systematically implements ongoing validation of assessment practices and judgements in each course to evaluate quality and drive continuous improvement. In VET courses, validation involves checking that assessment practices are in accordance with the Principles of Assessment (refer to section 4), and judgements are made in accordance with the Rules of Evidence (refer to section 5).

## 6.2 Assessment moderation

The requirement in the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 to undertake validation of assessment judgements does not prohibit THINK from undertaking similar activities, such as moderation, or any other process aimed at increasing the quality of assessment.

## 7. Feedback to students

Timely and constructive feedback allows students to monitor their progress and determine where improvements can be made to enhance their learning. Feedback will be provided in a timely manner, usually within two weeks of assignment submission.

## 8. Re-submission

### 8.1 VET assessments submitted on time

A VET student who submits an assessment task on time but whose work is deemed Unsatisfactory will be given two further opportunities to demonstrate competency in that task.

- Following notification of the unsatisfactory outcome, a student will have a further seven (7) calendar days from the date they have been notified to resubmit.
- If the outcome is still unsatisfactory, a student will have a further two (2) calendar days from the date they have been notified of the unsatisfactory outcome to submit for the third time

Re-submissions must be made on time. If after the third submission the student's assessment is still assessed as Unsatisfactory, that outcome will stand.

### 8.2 VET assessments submitted up to seven (7) calendar days after the due date

A VET student who submits an assessment up to seven (7) calendar days after the due date (or agreed extension date) and whose work is deemed Unsatisfactory will be given one further opportunity to demonstrate competency in that task.

- Following notification of the unsatisfactory outcome, a student will have two (2) calendar days from the date they have been notified to resubmit.

Re-submissions must be made on time. If, after the second submission, the student's assessment is still assessed as Unsatisfactory, that outcome will stand.

### 8.3 VET assessments submitted more than seven (7) calendar days after the due date

A VET student who submits an assessment more than seven (7) calendar days after the due date (or agreed extension date) and whose work is deemed Unsatisfactory will *not* be given a further opportunity to demonstrate competency in that task, unless there are exceptional or extenuating circumstances (see section 9).

VET assessments will not usually be accepted if submitted later than seven (7) calendar days after the study period ends without approval.

## 9. Unexpected or extenuating circumstances (special consideration)

THINK acknowledges that students may be academically disadvantaged when unexpected or extenuating circumstances impact on their performance or their ability to complete their assessment tasks by the specified date. In such circumstances a student may be eligible for a modified arrangement, such as:

- an assessment deadline extension or examination deferral
- re-submission, re-assessment or resitting an examination
- adjustment to assessment results

To be granted a modified arrangement, the student must submit a completed [Application for Assessment Special Consideration](#) form.

Unexpected or extenuating circumstances are those which were outside the control of the student and/or for which there was no opportunity to prepare in advance.

Unexpected or extenuating circumstances include:

- Medical circumstances: an unexpected illness, a recurrence of a chronic illness or an accident
  - A disability or illness for which a variation has already been made will not be accepted unless the disability has been compounded by an unexpected change, or an additional condition.
  - Supporting documentation must take the form of an original certificate or letter on letterhead from a registered treating medical practitioner, registered health practitioner or approved specialist, depending on the nature of the condition.
- Compassionate circumstances: hardship or trauma such as the death or serious illness of a close family member, severe disruption to domestic arrangements, being a victim of crime or an accident.
  - Supporting documentation may take the form of a letter from a campus counsellor who has prior knowledge of the student and their circumstances; an original medical certificate or letter on letterhead from a registered treating medical practitioner, registered health practitioner or approved specialist, depending on the nature of the condition; a letter from a person qualified to assess and support the application (e.g. clergy providing grief counselling); or a certificate from a funeral director or death notice.
  - Supporting documentation will not be accepted from a relative or personal friend of the student, or friend of the student's family.
- Special circumstances: religious observance or obligations, formal legal commitments, military service, service with a recognised emergency management service, representing THINK, a state or home nation at a significant sporting or cultural event or unforeseen and significant employment-related circumstances such as a move interstate at short notice.
  - Supporting documentation can include: a certified call to Australian Defence Force service, a description of the emergency attended for State Emergency Service or Country/Rural Fire Service personnel, an original letter confirming changed employment circumstances, an original letter confirming commitments for athletes and performing artists, a copy of an accident report or a court summons.
  - Supporting documentation will not be accepted from a relative or personal friend of the student, or friend of the student's family.

**Note:** Reasonable adjustments to assessments that enable a student with a disability or ongoing medical condition to participate on the same basis as other students without a disability will be made according to the [Disability Policy](#).

## 9.1. Assessment deadline extension

If a student has been affected by unexpected or extenuating circumstances and has yet to submit their assessment, they may be eligible for an extension.

- The Learning Facilitator (Lecturer) decides on extension applications.
- Extensions will provide a reasonable time, given the nature of the circumstances, for the student to complete the task without giving the student an unfair advantage over other students. A reasonable time will not extend beyond ten (10) working days except in exceptional circumstances. Applications requiring more than 10 working days' extension will be referred to the Program Director for a decision.
- Extension applications must be submitted at least one (1) working day prior to the assessment due date, unless the evidence of unexpected or extenuating circumstances provided indicates this would not have been possible.
- For all extensions, THINK's Grading Criteria applies in full.

## 9.2 Deferral of an examination

If a student has been affected by unexpected or extenuating circumstances and has yet to sit an exam, they may be eligible for an examination deferral.

- The Learning Facilitator (Lecturer) decides on examination deferral applications.
- Deferral of examinations will provide a reasonable time, given the nature of the circumstances, for the student to prepare without giving them an unfair advantage over other students. A reasonable time will not extend beyond ten (10) working days except in exceptional circumstances. Applications requiring more than 10 working days' deferral will be referred to the Program Director for a decision.
- Examination deferral applications must be submitted at least one (1) working day prior to the examination date, unless the evidence of unexpected or extenuating circumstances provided indicates this would not have been possible.
- For all examination deferrals, THINK's Grading Criteria applies in full.

## 9.3 Re-submission or resitting an examination

If a student has been affected by unexpected or extenuating circumstances and has already submitted or attempted their assessment, they may be eligible for re-submission or a resit.

- The Learning Facilitator (or delegate) decides on re-submission or resit applications.
- A resit or re-submission allows the student to keep preparing or working on a piece of assessment for a reasonable time, given the nature of the circumstances, without giving the student an unfair advantage over other students. A reasonable time will not extend beyond ten (10) working days from the date the student was advised in writing of approval to resubmit or resit, except in exceptional circumstances.
- For all re-submissions or resits, THINK's Grading Criteria applies in full.

## 9.4 Adjustments to assessment results

If a student has been affected by unexpected or extenuating circumstances and has already submitted or sat their final assessment despite facing these circumstances, the Examination Committee may decide to do one of the following:

- Adjust the result for the piece of work in question, taking into account the circumstances that affected the student and having regard to the student's overall performance within the course
- Make no adjustment, taking into account the circumstances that affected the student and having regard to the student's overall performance within the course.

This option is not available for formative assessments.

## 9.5 Other modified arrangements

Other alternative assessment arrangements may be approved by the Program Director (or delegate) in exceptional circumstances.

## 10. Requesting a re-assessment

A student who considers that an assessment task has been unfairly or inappropriately marked may request a re-assessment. Re-assessment involves the assessment task being marked again by a second assessor, without any further work by the student.

- A re-assessment must be requested to the Senior Learning Facilitator/ Senior Lecturer (or delegate) in writing within five (5) working days of the original result being released. The request needs to include details of reasons the student has deemed the assessment result as unfair or inappropriate in regards to published assessment criteria.
- If the Senior Learning Facilitator/Senior Lecturer (or delegate) approves the request for a re-assessment, a second assessor will review the same assessment with the following conditions:
  - The second assessor is not provided with details of the student's original mark
  - The original assessor will be asked to comment on the re-evaluated assessment
  - The full range of outcomes which were used on the original assessment task must be available for re-assessment.
  - The original and the second results will be referred to the Program Director (or delegate) for final determination of the result to stand, which may be higher or lower than the original result.
  - No further re-assessment is permitted.
- If the Senior Learning Facilitator/Senior Lecturer (or delegate) does not approve the request for a re-assessment, the student is provided with a written response outlining why the request was rejected.

If the request for re-assessment is not approved, the original result will stand. Students who are not satisfied with the result of their request for a re-assessment may request a review of their final result in accordance with section 12 below.

## 11. Grading criteria

### 11.1 Final notations

All assessments for VET courses are assessed according to the rules outlined in the relevant Training Package or accredited course. Each unit of competency is allocated a result as follows:

Outcome	Abbreviation	Description
Competent	C	Competent is awarded to a student who has achieved all of the learning outcomes specified for the subject to the required standard.
Not Yet Competent	NYC	Not Yet Competent is awarded to a student who has attempted all the assessment items but failed to achieve all of the learning outcomes specified for the subject to the required standard.

#### 11.1.1 Other final notations

Notation	Abbreviation	Description
Withdrawn Deleted	WD	The student has withdrawn from the subject without financial or academic penalty.
Discontinued	DISC	The student has failed to attempt all assessment items.
Withdrawn Discontinued	WDIS	The student has withdrawn prior to attempting all assessment items.
Credit Transfer	CT	The student has achieved all of the learning outcomes specified for the subject to the required standard through prior formal learning.

Recognition of Prior Learning	RPL	The student has achieved all of the learning outcomes specified for that subject to the required standard through prior learning that includes informal and/or non-formal learning, and may also include formal learning.
Recognition of Prior Learning – Not Granted	RNG	The student has not achieved all of the learning outcomes specified for that subject to the required standard through prior learning that includes informal and/or non-formal learning, and may also include formal learning.

## 11.2 Interim notations

Notation	Abbreviation	Description
Incomplete	IN	The student has been granted additional time in which to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes specified for the subject to the required standard.
Conditional Credit Transfer	CCT	The student will have achieved all of the learning outcomes specified for the subject conditional on completion of current formal learning.

## 12. Requesting a review of the final result

A student who considers that their final subject result is inappropriate or unfair may request a review of their final result.

A review must be requested from the Program Director (or delegate) in accordance with the provisions of the [Student Complaints Policy](#).

The review may result in:

- Adjustment of the student's results, or
- No change to the original results.

The student may choose to appeal the decision under the [Student Complaints Policy](#).

## 13. References

Disability Discrimination Act (Cth) 1992

ELICOS National Standards

Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 – Part 2, Standard 1