Assessment Policy & Procedure

Purpose & Legislative Background

According to clauses 1.8-1.12 of Standard 1 of Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015, PARAGON POLYTECHNIC will recognise assessment as a core service to be offered to its students and it will be the centre of our operation as a Registered Training Organisation. Quality assessment will ensure 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 or enterprise requirements are contextualized and integrated within the assessment.
- That evidence is gathered that meets the rules of evidence.
- That assessment is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment.
- Additionally, Standard 2 of National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, gives detailed explanation about the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy.

Scope

This policy is designed to ensure that the assessment practices of PARAGON POLYTECHNIC are consistent with policies and guidelines issued through state and national training authorities, and relevant national training packages.

Policy

Assessing the Unit of Competency

PARAGON POLYTECHNIC 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, we apply 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 and the requirements of the evidence conditions. This process ensures that our 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 be useful late on as a reference to demonstrate the validity of the assessment. An assessment mapping document is available for this purpose.

Assessment context

PARAGON POLYTECHNIC 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 a manufacturing workshop. 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. To achieve this, we will apply the following strategies:

- Incorporation of the common workplace policies and procedures into the assessment scenario or activity.
- 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.
- Incorporation of regulatory information relating to licensing which applies to the unit of competency.
- Tailoring the program outcomes to meet the organisational training needs of the enterprise without compromising the Training Package requirements.

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- Creating assessment activities which require the student to conduct specific research relating to industry situations and occurrences where applicable.
- Provide a realistic simulated workplace within PARAGON POLYTECHNIC facilities.

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 context. This means that the competency is transferable and is a fundamental element of competency-based training and assessment.

Principles

In the delivery of assessment services, PARAGON POLYTECHNIC applies the principles of assessment. Assessment strategies have been designed to ensure:

Validity. We conduct assessment against the broad range of skills and knowledge identified within each unit of competency and which is integrated with the performance of workplace tasks. We ensure that the assessment is transferable to different context and situations and all components of the unit of competency are being assessed.

Reliability. We seek to gather and interpret evidence in a consistent manner that provides for reliable assessment both for the student and for assessors. We achieve this by using assessors who have the required competencies in assessment and the relevant vocational competencies. Our assessment resources also provide for standardised outcomes supported by model answers to guide assessors in their judgements. Reliability is also supported by the moderation of assessment judgements across our assessors.

Flexibility. We strive to provide assessment opportunities that reflect a student's needs. Our chosen assessment strategies provide for recognition of a student's current competency, employ a range of methods appropriate to the context of the industry, the unit of competency and the student themselves.

Fairness. Our assessment approach encourages fairness in assessment through consideration of the student's needs and characteristics and through making reasonable adjustments when it is required. Assessors achieve this through clear communication with a student to ensure that the student is fully informed about, understands and is able to participate in, the assessment process, and agrees that the process is appropriate.

Collecting evidence that counts – the rules of evidence

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

Sufficiency. We ensure the collection of valid assessment evidence in such quantity to ensure that all aspects of competency have been satisfied and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly. The collection of sufficient assessment evidence will be supported by using a range of assessment methods which lead to the collection of evidence over time based on a range of performances.

Validity. We collect evidence that directly aligns with the components documented within each unit of competency. The collected assessment evidence must replicate the outputs of the task as though it were being performed within an actual workplace. This may include the observation of the student performing the tasks relevant to the unit of competency or the collection of a completed workplace products. Assessment evidence that is purely academic in nature should be given a lesser priority to the collection of evidence that relates directly to the student performing the tasks indicative to the unit of competency.

Authenticity. We seek evidence that is authentic. To support this, assessors must be assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the student's own work. Where documentary evidence is relied on it must be certified or supported by two other forms of evidence which demonstrate the same skill or knowledge. In all instances, where work is submitted external to PARAGON POLYTECHNIC (i.e.; electronically, distance assignments, online) this is to include a signed authenticity statement by the student that they certify the work as their own.

Currency. We must be satisfied that the student currently holds the skills and knowledge relating to a particular unit of competency. Assessment evidence is to be based on the student's performance either at the time of the assessment decision or in the very recent past. Questions of evidence currency will mostly relate to recognition of prior learning applications where a student has been in the workplace for many years and is seeking recognition of skills and knowledge obtained through workplace experience or previous training. In all situations, assessors must validate the currency of a student's knowledge and skills.

Engagement with industry

PARAGON POLYTECHNIC is well placed to leverage off current industry associations to incorporate industry requirements into the

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assessment process. Consultation with enterprises or industry will provide information about assessment requirements relevant to workplaces. Regulatory requirements that relate to specific units of competency will be incorporated to ensure our students are well prepared for their workplace duties. Further information on industry engagement can be found in the Industry Engagement Policy.

Recognition of prior learning

PARAGON POLYTECHNIC will provide all students the opportunity to seek recognition of their prior learning. Recognition 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 sections on Recognition.

Credit transfer

PARAGON POLYTECHNIC will recognise and award credit transfer for students presenting with current competence. Where a student is seeking credit transfer for a unit of competency that is on our scope of registration and the student can provide documentary evidence that the unit has been previously awarded to the student, credit transfer will be awarded. It is important to note that credit transfer or credit transfer is not an assessment. It is an administrative function that determines the equivalence of a unit of competency the student has been previously awarded to units of competency incorporated into courses being delivered by PARAGON POLYTECHNIC. If the unit is the same or is equivalent, then the unit may be issued as a credit transfer. This is not to be confused with the recognition of prior learning which is a method of assessment. Please refer to the Credit transfer policy for further guidance.

Competence of assessors

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

Where an assessor does not hold the required training and assessment competence, but is a recognised industry expert, we will put appropriate supervision arrangements in place to support the gathering of valid evidence. Further guidance on supporting these assessors can be found in this manual in the policy on Assessment Partnerships.

Assessment Process

The following procedure is to be applied for conducting assessments:
Step 1: Prepare for assessment.
The assessor is to:
   a. Establish the context and purpose of the evidence to be collected
   b. Identify and analyse the units of competency, Training Package and PARAGON POLYTECHNIC assessment strategy to identify the evidence requirements
   c. Review the assessment tools and confirm their currency and adequacy in meeting the rules of evidence.

Step 2: Prepare the student.
   a. The assessor meets with the student to:
   b. Explain the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process
   c. Explain the units of competency to be assessed and the evidence to be collected
   d. Outline the assessment procedure and the preparation the student should undertake, and answer any questions
   e. Assess the needs of the student and, where applicable, negotiate reasonable adjustment for assessing people with disabilities without compromising the competency outcomes
   f. Seek feedback regarding the student's understanding of the units of competency, evidence requirements and assessment process
   g. Determine if the student is ready for assessment and, in consultation with the student, decide on the time and place of the assessment.

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

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

Step 4: Collect the evidence and make the assessment decision.

The assessor must:

a. Establish and oversee the evidence-gathering process to ensure its validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility
b. Collect appropriate evidence and match compatibility to the elements, performance criteria, range statement and evidence guide in the relevant units of competency
c. Evaluate evidence in terms of the four dimensions of competency - task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills
d. Incorporate allowable adjustments to the assessment procedure without compromising the integrity of the competencies
e. Evaluate the evidence in terms of validity, consistency, currency, authenticity and sufficiency
f. Consult and work with other staff, assessment panel members or technical experts involved in the assessment process
g. Record details of evidence collected
h. 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 assessor must provide advice to the student about the outcomes of the assessment process. This includes providing the student with:

a. Clear and constructive feedback on the assessment decision
b. Information on ways of overcoming any identified gaps in competency revealed by the assessment
c. The opportunity to discuss the assessment process and outcome
d. Information on reassessment and the appeals process if applicable.

Step 6: Record and report the result.

The assessor must:

a. Record the assessment outcome according to the policies and procedures of PARAGON POLYTECHNIC
b. Maintain records of the assessment procedure, evidence collected and the outcome according to the policies and procedures of PARAGON POLYTECHNIC
c. Maintain the confidentiality of the assessment outcome
d. Organise the issuance of statements of attainment according to the policies and procedures of PARAGON POLYTECHNIC.

Step 7: Review the assessment process.

On completion of the assessment process, the assessor must:

a. Review the assessment process
b. Report on the positive and negative features of the assessment to those responsible for the assessment procedures
c. If necessary, suggest to an appropriate PARAGON POLYTECHNIC personnel ways of improving the assessment procedures through raising a Continuous Improvement Report or by providing input to the next scheduled assessment validation.

Step 8: Participate in the reassessment and appeals process.

The assessor must:

a. Provide feedback and counselling to the student, if required, regarding the assessment outcome or process, including guidance on further options
b. Provide the student with information on the reassessment and appeals process
c. Report any assessment decision that is disputed by the student to appropriate PARAGON POLYTECHNIC personnel
d. Participate in the reassessment or appeal according to the policies and procedures of PARAGON POLYTECHNIC.

Management Action & Responsibility

Academic Manager will be held responsible for overall adherence of this policy.

All the trainers are responsible for implementing and maintaining key principles of assessment and providing required information, support and direction to the students.

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All the documents related to assessment policy will be approved by CEO of PARAGON POLYTECHNIC,

Definition

AQF means Australian Qualifications Framework which can be accessed at http://www.aqf.edu.au/

ASQA means Australian Skills Quality Authority which is the national VET regulator and the RTO's registering body

ANAE means Australian National Academy of Education

Course means any nationally recognised qualification, unit of competency, skill set or short course delivered by the RTO.

Legislative Context

The legislative base for this policy is as follows:
- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Cth)
- The ESOS Act 2000
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Regulations 2001
- The National Code 2018

Policy Control

Version	Date	Changes / Updates	Approved
1.0	Aug 2020	RTO Policy and Procedure of PARAGON POLYTECHNIC	CEO

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