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1. Description and Scope

This describes assessment policy for IHNA.

2. Assessment Policy

In general terms assessment during training may include,

- Case studies
- Observation of competency in simulated environment and on-the-job
- Question and answer sessions
- Projects
- Assignments
- Presentations
- Role plays
- Written tests
- Article review
- Participation in Classroom activities

Integrated assessment of some units / modules may occur.

Advance notice of the assessment will be given to students for all forms of assessment and an assessment agreement is signed by the student at the commencement of the course. Assessment agreement should be clear in terms of general information and instruction to students (e.g. For written assessments: regarding the expected student behavior, actions against plagiarism and cheating, contact person, timeline of submission, marking guide and so on).

Institute of Health and Nursing Australia student assessment is based upon achievement of competency by each student. Competency involves the specification of skills and knowledge and their application to a particular standard of performance required in the workplace. Aspects of work performance included in this concept involve:

- Performance at an acceptable level of technical skill;
- Organising one's tasks;
- Responding and reacting appropriately when things go wrong; and
- Transferring skills and knowledge to new situations and contexts.

3.1 Assessment guide

Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on the extent and nature of performance and other requirements, as described in a set of standards, or learning outcomes, resulting in a judgement of whether or not competency has been demonstrated.

Effective and objective assessment is the key to the successful implementation of competency standards in the workplace and in education. This is the judgement of performance and knowledge against the relevant industry competency standards.

Assessment is carried out by the comparison of a candidate's evidence of skills and knowledge, against the requirements of the Standards.

3.2 Underlying principles of assessment

For an effective assessment system in a competency environment, some basic principles must apply:

Validity

The assessments actually assess what they claim to assess and what they have been designed to assess.



Validity of assessment is achieved when:

- Assessors are fully aware of what is to be assessed, as indicated by the standards of competence, including clearly defined performance criteria
- Appropriate evidence is collected from activities that can be clearly related to the units of competency.

Authenticity

The evidence collected is authentic - that is, it is actually derived from valid sources and is directly attributable to the individual.

Reliability

Reliable assessment uses methods and procedures that ensure that the competency standards are interpreted and applied consistently from person to person and from context to context.

The following are important to ensure that assessment produces consistent outcomes:

- Clear, unambiguous, well- documented assessment procedures and competency standards;
- Clear, consistent and specific assessment criteria;
- Effectively trained, briefed and monitored assessors;
- Adequate assessors across industries and a hierarchy of assessment which ensures a quality outcome; and
- Assessment is carried out within a system flexible enough to cope with multiple and diverse forms of evidence.

Consistency

The assessment system must ensure that evidence collected and provided for judgement is consistent across the range, without undue reliance on any small number of select workplace contexts or projects.

Currency

Under an effective system, assessment evaluates whether or not the individual's skills and knowledge are current and can be applied in today's workplace. As a general rule, competencies that have not been demonstrated within the past 3 years are not usually accepted as "current". However, an assessor, under some circumstances may make exceptions to the specified period.

There may be specific situations where individual skills have not been directly applied for a longer period, but these skills are in fact still current for the individual. In cases such as this, evidence from earlier periods may be admissible, and assessed for currency, within an appropriately flexible assessment system.

Sufficiency

Evidence of competency should be sufficient to cover all the elements, performance criteria and required range of variables in the standards against which assessment is to be carried out.

A tendency of many candidates is to provide more (or less) evidence than is actually required to prove competency against the standards. An effective assessment system ensures that candidates are clearly advised regarding the amount and form of evidence, which is sufficient to prove competency. This should avoid the situation where masses of evidence are provided, requiring assessors to spend more time than necessary per candidate, or too little evidence, making it difficult to judge competence.



Flexibility

Every portfolio or set of candidate evidence is unique. Each candidate will identify and develop his or her own specific set of evidence to prove competency against the standards. This set will be based on the workplace experience of the candidate and will comprise diverse types and forms of relevant and appropriate evidence.

Assessors must be capable of taking a flexible approach to the assessment of evidence. Clearly, this approach must always take time and cost into account - both to ensure the best use of assessor time and from the viewpoint of the candidate and his or her employer.

An assessment system must evaluate the scope of knowledge and skills covered by the criteria - both performance (skill) and underpinning knowledge & understanding.

Fairness and Equity

An assessment system and its processes must not disadvantage any person or organisation. All eligible candidates must be guaranteed access to assessment, which does not discriminate on any basis. Assessment guidelines must include an approach for working with candidates who have special needs.

To achieve these principles, the assessment system must exhibit the following characteristics:

- The standards, assessment processes and all associated information are straight forward and understandable;
- The characteristics of potential candidates are identified, to enable all potential assessment issues to be identified and catered for;
- The chosen processes and materials within the system of assessment do not disadvantage candidates;
- An appropriate and effective review and dispute resolution mechanism is in place to investigate, examine and redress any issue of unfairness or disadvantage identified, involving access, assessment, certification or any other related issue; and
- Where potential disadvantages are identified, the system is amended to avoid or counter them, or appropriate steps taken to overcome them including reassessment if required.

3.3 Assessors

Assessor includes both IHNA faculty and external stakeholders (where ever applicable based on the course offered). The role of an assessor is to objectively assess and judge a candidate's evidence against a set of standards. In order to do this effectively, an assessor must have a sound knowledge of, and be skilled in, the relevant industry area. In addition, the assessor must have acknowledged competency in assessment itself and hold an appropriate qualification (refer to IHNA's compliance documentation for NVR Standard SNR 15.4.)

An assessor must:

- Interpret and understand the criteria;
- Ensure that evidence meets the standards;
- Ensure that evidence is valid, authentic, reliable, consistent, current and sufficient; and
- Use expertise to make fair and objective judgments.

The training and ongoing professional development of assessors must include such areas as:

- Roles, responsibilities and ethics;
- Procedural and administrative duties;
- Performance and knowledge evidence gathering and presentation;



- Interpretation and usage of standards;
- Selecting and using appropriate methods of assessment; and
- Requirements regarding processing and recording of results, progress and feedback.

It is crucial that assessors always understand and practice fair, objective, unbiased and flexible assessment processes. Assessors are encouraged to contribute to the assessment strategy development and conduct the assessment process cognisant to existing best practice and research in the relevant field.

3.4 Forms of Evidence

In general, basic forms of skills evidence include:

Direct performance evidence - current or from an acceptable past period - from:

- Extracted examples within the workplace;
 - Natural observation in the workplace; and
 - Simulations, including competency and skills tests, projects, assignments
- Supplementary evidence, from:
- Oral and written questioning;
 - Personal reports; and
 - Witness testimony.

Appropriate and valid forms of assessment utilised for both skills and knowledge may include:

- Evaluation of direct products of work;
- Natural observation;
- Skill tests, simulations and projects;
- Evaluation of underpinning knowledge and understanding;
- Questioning and discussion; and
- Evidence from prior achievement and activity.

3.5 Candidates with Special Needs and Reasonable adjustment

One fundamental principle of an assessment system is that each candidate must have access to fair and open assessment. Candidates with special needs should be offered the same opportunities as any other candidate.

As special needs extend to more than identified physical or learning difficulties, an assessor will also need to consider the best approach (e.g. Extra time to attend exams) when dealing with candidates with needs such as low literacy, lack of confidence or non-English speaking background (e.g. mature aged students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse background)

An assessor must take special needs into consideration when assessing and depending on any specification given in the standards/training and assessment strategies, the assessor may be able to accept alternative evidence from a candidate with special needs. Each training and assessment strategy will have allowable reasonable adjustment processes identified for the assessor.

If there is uncertainty, the assessor should call on other assessors or a verifier for assistance and guidance, as required. In such a case, the situation must be fully documented, with appropriate feedback being provided to the candidate at all stages.



3.6 Feedback

The instructions to the assessor section of the 'Assessment General Information & Instruction' outlines feedback process and marking timeframe. Comments on assessment performance will be noted in the assessment tool at the end of each relevant section. Where students are assessed as not yet competent will be provided with additional feedback on their assessment outcome to assist in achieving the required performance standard on reassessment.

3.7 Reassessment

Each student will be given an opportunity for one reassessment for any competencies not achieved on the first attempt. Re-assessment fee will be applicable if the student is removed from a professional experience venue.

Failure at the work placement will result in a learner contract being developed prior to reassessment.

After the second attempt if competence is not achieved, students will be required to repeat the unit/modules at their own cost.

The written notice (of intention to report the student for unsatisfactory progress) will inform the student that they are able to access IHNA's complaints and appeals process and that the student has 5 working days in which to do so.

Maximum time that a student can take to complete the course in all delivery modes is set by IHNA as not more than 4 months extension from corresponding face to face delivery course duration (in terms of months) provided there is no un-informed learning inactive period over two months. If a course is delivered only through Distance education, the students will be allowed to take up to 12 months to complete the course provided there is no un-informed inactive period over two months.

The maximum time includes time required to complete both theoretical and professional experience placement durations of a course where ever applicable. Only exclusion from this will be for students who come under special circumstances or conditions as mentioned in Academic participation and progress policy.

Supportive policies:

To be read in conjunction with:

- Trainer/Assessor qualification policy
- Deferral/leave of absence/ Withdrawal / Discontinuation policy
- Quality assurance and continuous improvement policy
- Assessment policy
- Access and equity policy
- Risk assessment and risk minimisation
- Validation and Moderation policy
- Conduct of examinations policy and procedure