VET Assessment System Policy and Procedure

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') is committed to providing effective and high-quality training and assessment experiences in which staff, students, and external stakeholders have justified confidence in the University's Vocational Education and Training (VET) delivery and assessment processes and outcomes.

(2) The University is committed to producing competent VET graduates who effectively meet the challenges of a complex, changing world and meet industry requirements.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This policy identifies and describes the principles underpinning the University's VET assessment system that:

a. is fit for purpose;
b. is industry-relevant;
c. is consistent with the training product; and
d. can be consistently applied to all students.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This policy applies across all University campuses to all students enrolled in VET Training Products approved for delivery, as per the University Scope of Registration and all VET lecturers (including third-party providers) involved in the conduct and/or validation of assessment practices and processes. This will be achieved through:

a. University-wide implementation of the VET assessment system.
b. VET lecturers qualified in line with the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 and the RTO Credential Policy 2025.
c. Communicating clearly with students concerning assessment requirements and their progress towards successful outcomes.
d. Ensuring integrity in the conduct of assessment and assessment processes.

(5) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for VET students is conducted and managed in accordance with the VET Recognition Procedure.

(6) Qualifications for conducting and validating assessments are conducted and managed in accordance with the VET Trainer and Assessor Qualifications, Competency and Industry Currency Procedure.

Section 4 - Policy

(7) The VET Assessment System Policy and Procedure ensures that VET assessment, including Recognition of Prior

Learning (RPL), complies with the RTO Outcome Standards 2025, particularly the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence.

Principles of Assessment

(8) Assessment in VET units and courses is underpinned by the principles of Fairness, Flexibility, Validity, and Reliability.

Fairness

(9) The individual student's needs are considered in the assessment process.

(10) Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are applied to consider the individual student's needs.

(11) The student is informed about the assessment process and provided with the opportunity to challenge the assessment result and be reassessed if necessary.

Flexibility

(12) Assessment is flexible to VET student needs by:

a. Assessing skills and knowledge that are relevant to the training product.
b. Assessing competencies held by the student no matter how or where they have been acquired.
c. 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.

Validity

(13) Assessment includes practical components that enable the VET student to demonstrate the relevant skills and knowledge in a practical setting.

Reliability

(14) Assessment evidence is interpreted consistently by assessors and the outcomes of assessment are comparable irrespective of which assessor is conducting the assessment.

Rules of Evidence

(15) Assessment in VET units and courses is supported by four Rules of Evidence:

Validity

(16) Assessment evidence is adequate, such that the assessor can be reasonably assured that the VET student possesses the skills and knowledge described in the training product.

Sufficiency

(17) The quality, quantity and relevance of the assessment evidence enables the assessor to make an informed judgement of the VET student’s competency in the skills and knowledge described in the training product.

Authenticity

(18) The assessor is assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the student's own work.

Currency

(19) The assessment evidence presented to the assessor documents and demonstrates the VET student's current skills and knowledge. This requires the assessment evidence to be from the present or the very recent past.

(20) The VET Assessment System Policy and Procedure underpins and guides the development and design of assessment strategies. VET lecturers use the information contained in each unit of competency and assessment requirements to:

a. engage and consult with industry regarding the physical, digital, and human resources required for specific assessment contexts;
b. develop assessment tools that are fair, flexible, valid, and reliable and reflect authentic practice-based learning;
c. set benchmarks for measuring student performance using observable behaviours; and
d. provide opportunities for assessment in different workplace contexts and environments.

(21) In the conduct of assessment, VET lecturers assess students to determine if students can perform tasks and demonstrate knowledge according to industry benchmarks and follow the elements and performance criteria as specified in the unit of competency against the following:

a. skills, performance, and knowledge evidence;
b. assessment requirements;
c. dimensions of competency.

(22) In the achievement of competency, students have satisfactorily demonstrated their:

a. Ability to demonstrate required skills and knowledge as they perform relevant tasks in a variety of workplace situations or simulated workplace situations.
b. Understanding of what they are doing and why when performing tasks in the workplace.
c. Ability to engage skills and knowledge within different workplace contexts to demonstrate they can adapt to different workplaces over time.

(23) The VET Assessment System Policy and Procedure is the basis for the University VET assessment system, comprising a coordinated set of procedures, processes, guidelines, checklists, templates, and assessment tools to ensure that:

a. VET assessment (including RPL) complies with the assessment requirements of the relevant Training Package or VET Accredited Course and is conducted per the Principles of Assessment and the Rules of Evidence;
b. Each VET lecturer holds the qualifications, vocational competence, and industry currency to conduct valid assessments and participate in assessment validation as per the RTO Credential Policy 2025 and relevant Training Package, Companion Volume, or Accredited Curriculum;
c. students are provided with relevant information about assessment conditions, context, requirements, and resources;
d. students are provided with enough time to practice and demonstrate competence;
e. students are assessed or transitioned to a replacement training product within required timeframes;
f. student results are recorded and reported;
g. pre- and post-assessment validation of assessment tools and judgements is systematically carried out; and
h. assessment evidence and materials are retained as per the RTO Compliance Standards 2025.

Section 5 - Procedure

Planning and designing the assessment strategy

(24) During the assessment planning phase, the VET Team must plan the assessment strategy for a VET course in the Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS). The steps include:

a. consulting with industry to ensure:
    i. new industry trends, practices, and/or equipment are incorporated into the assessment strategy;
    ii. assessment outcomes provide students with the knowledge and skills required in the workplace;
    iii. industry validation of any simulated environments;
    iv. the suitability of the VET lecturer's industry experience; and
    v. external accreditation requirements are met.
b. planning the assessment methods to be used within each unit and/or cluster to comply with the assessment requirements and conditions, as well as the Training Package Companion Volume;
c. identifying any specific requirements for different cohorts of students for each context (for example, simulated, apprentices/trainees, remote, VET in Secondary Schools, international, online, work-based);
d. ensuring reasonable adjustment options are considered, suggested, and can be recorded;
e. obtaining the resources and facilities necessary to conduct assessment, including simulated work environments;
f. negotiating with employers/supervisors about workplace assessment, and training plans for apprentices and trainees;
g. ensuring VET lecturers are qualified for every unit they assess through the development, update and approval of VET Lecturer Competency Matrices in the curriculum management system (CMS).

(25) During the assessment design phase, the assessment strategy for a VET course is documented in the TAS via CMS. This includes:

a. the types of assessment methods, when and how the assessment will occur, whether the assessment is conducted for each unit or clustered units, and any resources required to support assessment.
b. detail about variations due to location or student cohort.

Planning and designing the assessment tools

Assessment tools

(26) VET Teams design assessment tools or contextualise third-party assessment tools for units and/or clusters of units. For a student to be assessed as competent, the student must have the combined knowledge and skills to demonstrate:

a. the ability to perform authentic tasks in a variety of workplace or simulated environments;
b. consistency in performance and the ability to adapt performance for different circumstances;
c. application of knowledge when performing tasks; and
d. the ability to transfer skills to different workplace contexts and environments.

(27) Assessment tools must be designed and contextualised to:

a. provide details about the context and conditions of assessment to ensure consistency by different VET lecturers and across different student cohorts;

b. ensure the assessment tasks and methods align with the assessment requirements as described in the VET unit of competency;
c. use a range of assessment methods recognising that students demonstrate competence in a variety of ways;
d. use a range of environments and contexts relevant to the VET unit for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a variety of situations;
e. ensure skills are assessed by observing the student carrying out the relevant task in an appropriate environment; and
f. describe the evidence to be gathered and how the evidence is to be presented and submitted.

(28) Before the assessment is undertaken, students must be provided with opportunities for learning and practice, such as:

a. The opportunity to complete practice tasks and knowledge checks;
b. Compulsory and recommended resources, such as websites, readings from texts or workbooks; and
c. Information about how to apply for reasonable adjustment.

(29) A Student Unit Guide must be developed to provide information to students about the assessment process using the University approved Student Unit Guide template.

(30) An Assessor Guide must be developed using the University approved Assessor Guide template to ensure different VET lecturers will make consistent decisions for varied student cohorts and locations. The same evidence presented by different students or to different VET lecturers should result in the same decision.

(31) An Assessor Guide will include the following sections:

a. Clear instructions for the VET lecturers about the context and conditions of the assessment;
b. An assessment matrix that maps the assessment tasks to the elements, performance criteria, knowledge evidence, performance evidence, and assessment conditions;
c. Evidence criteria for assessing students' knowledge and skills;
d. Student information about the number of attempts and resubmissions permittable;
e. Relevant administration, recording, and reporting instructions and requirements; and
f. Clear instructions to the assessor on reasonable adjustment available to learners.

(32) Evidence criteria in the Assessor Guide is developed to judge the quality of the evidence, to minimise variation between VET lecturers and could include:

a. Model answers;
b. Descriptions of observable behavioural benchmarks to assess skills;
c. Descriptions of the application of knowledge in practical activities;
d. Benchmark answers for written and verbal responses; and
e. Marking guides.

(33) Benchmarks for observations and written or verbal answers should include a range of responses to allow for variations in context and task. Benchmarks in observation checklists must include "observable behaviours". These are the behaviours that must be exhibited by the student when carrying out the task or activity. For example, when developing observation checklists, it is not appropriate to simply cut and paste from the unit of competency.

(34) Assessment tools must be created using mandatory University VET assessment tool templates in VETQMS – VET Resources and Forms.

Pre-assessment validation and VET Assessment Panel

(35) Pre-assessment validation is a quality assurance process conducted before the assessment tools, methods, processes, and practices are used and before judgements are made as per Standard 1.3(2) of the RTO Outcome Standards 2025.

(36) All assessment tools and practices for VET units of competency, whether purchased or developed internally, must undergo pre-assessment validation prior to delivery to ensure the University's assessment tools and practices:

a. meet the Principles of Assessment;
b. support the Rules of Evidence;
c. meet the assessment requirements of the relevant training product and package; and
d. comply with any legislative or regulatory obligations.

(37) VET Team Leaders must ensure that the VET Unit and Pre-assessment Validation report in the Quality Assurance Tile in the CMS is used to conduct and record the pre-assessment validation to ensure that the assessment tools and practices for each VET unit of competency are validated against the:

a. Elements and performance criteria;
b. Foundation skills;
c. Knowledge evidence;
d. Performance evidence;
e. Assessment requirements;
f. Assessment conditions; and
g. AQF level.

(38) The VET Team Leader must ensure that the VET lecturers listed on the TAS work together to pre-validate assessment tools for units and/or clusters of units. The VET Team Leader may also invite other people with assessment design, vocational, and/or industry experience to assist in pre-assessment validation.

(39) The VET Team Leader must ensure recommendations from the pre-assessment validation are actioned before the assessment tools and practices are submitted to the VET Assessment Panel. Once the VET Team Leader has finalised the pre-assessment validation of a VET unit of competency, it is submitted to the VET Assessment Panel for approval.

(40) A VET Assessment Panel is established by the membership criteria outlined in the VET Assessment Panel Terms of Reference.

(41) The VET Assessment Panel must review the VET unit’s full suite of assessment tools and practices, identify actions, and comment on the VET Unit and Pre-assessment Validation report in the Quality Assurance Tile in the CMS. If further improvements are required, the VET Assessment Panel Chair will return the report to the VET Team Leader in the CMS. When outcomes of the review have informed changes to the assessment tool, the VET Assessment Panel will approve the VET Unit and Pre-assessment report in the CMS.

(42) The Senior TAFE Quality Manager must ensure that the schedule for the VET Assessment Panel is implemented as agreed to with the Team Leader as outlined in the VET Course Registration Procedure.

(43) All assessment tools and practices for all VET unit of competency must be reviewed by the Assessment Panel before submission to the TAFE LTC and/or APC for course approval and at least three months before the course delivery date.

Conducting assessment

(44) During the assessment implementation phase, VET lecturers prepare students for assessment, conduct the assessment, collect evidence, and make, record, and validate judgements.

(45) Sound enrolment processes will help identify students' needs and avoid students being enrolled in a course they cannot complete. At enrolment or before the commencement of training, VET lecturers:

a. determine if the VET course is suitable for the students through pre-enrolment screening and/or interview;
b. offer Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or credit transfer to all students if appropriate; and
c. consider the student's needs in the assessment process and make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the student (such as providing oral rather than written assessment). However, the rigour of the assessment process should not be compromised (e.g. if there is a requirement to complete documentation in a VET unit of competency, an oral assessment would not be appropriate).

(46) Before conducting an assessment, VET lecturers must:

a. prepare students for assessment;
b. ensure students are fully informed about the assessment process, performance expectations and appeals process;
c. locate and use the full suite of assessment tools for each VET unit of competency approved by the VET Assessment Panel;
d. understand the conditions of the assessment, reasonable adjustment, and the appeals process;
e. hold the appropriate qualifications, vocational competency, and industry currency to assess that unit. This must be reflected in an approved CMS VET Lecturer Competency Matrix;
f. recognise if students may have already demonstrated some aspects of the unit through other means; and
g. conduct the assessment following all the instructions in the Assessor Guide.

(47) The Rules of Evidence are achieved by:

a. ensuring evidence is directly related to the competency being assessed;
b. ensuring that there are well-developed benchmark answers for written, verbal and observation assessment tasks;
c. ensuring a direct relationship exists between the student's assessment task, the evidence presented by the student, and the assessment requirements;
d. ensuring enough evidence is gathered to make a valid judgement of competence or otherwise;
e. recognising that the quantity of evidence will vary between students. Some may take longer, while others may need to complete more tasks to demonstrate competence;
f. ensuring the evidence demonstrates that person's skills and knowledge. For example, group assessments may not provide authentic evidence for each student involved in the group assessment;
g. verifying that the person being enrolled, trained, and assessed is the same person who will be issued a qualification or statement of attainment. Regardless of the delivery method, the student's identity must be verified;
h. verifying evidence submitted through independent study (e.g. assignments or projects) is the student's own work, by using online systems to check for plagiarism and identical content in other submissions; and
i. determining that the evidence is current enough to show the student is competent at the time of the assessment decision. This varies between industries, and a VET lecturer, as someone with current industry skills and knowledge, is well-placed to make this judgement.

(48) After the assessment is completed and the evidence is collected, VET lecturers must:

a. make consistent assessment judgements by following the Assessor Guide and the evidence criteria contained within;
b. make an assessment judgement following the Rules of Evidence;
c. record satisfactory/unsatisfactory on the assessment task;
d. provide feedback on the assessment judgement;
e. sign and date the assessment judgement;
f. ensure the student receives written feedback for each assessment task;
g. ensure the student signs and dates the assessment judgement after receiving feedback;
h. gain feedback from students on the assessment process; and
i. record student results on the Assessment Summary form, which both the student and VET lecturer must sign and date.

(49) If a student cannot complete the required task to the level described in the assessment requirements, organise further training and/or practice before being reassessed.

Resulting Students

(50) Student results are recorded on the Assessment Summary form by the VET lecturer for each assessment task.

(51) Students are notified of their results. The VET lecturer must ensure that class lists entered in the Student Management System have been reconciled with students who have participated in the assessment.

(52) If assessments are undertaken within Learnline, the VET lecturer stores student results in Gradebook. Students can view their grades in Gradebook. However, it is important to note that the results displayed in Learnline are not final, as Gradebook is not the official area for final results.

(53) According to University grading requirements, the VET lecturer must enter the final results for a student in the Student Management System (SMS) for every VET unit of competence. The date on which the final result is entered in the SMS is the official date the judgement of competence is made. That when a student's appeal of grade requires a change of grade, the date the new result is entered into the SMS becomes the official judgement date for retention purposes.

RPL Assessment

(54) RPL is a form of assessment and uses evidence from formal, non-formal, and informal learning rather than specific assessment activities. RPL must be conducted with the same rigour as any other form of assessment.

(55) VET students are offered opportunities to seek recognition of prior learning and are made aware of the policies for seeking recognition of prior learning.

(56) The VET Recognition Procedure outlines the University's process for completing an RPL assessment.

Retention of Assessment Evidence

(57) The VET Team or VET lecturer must retain for each VET student all records of assessment, including:

a. completed student assessment tasks containing VET lecturer feedback;
b. completed and signed (by the student and VET lecturer) Assessment Summary or Learnline Gradebook; and
c. RPL evidence (if applicable).

(58) The VET Team must retain the above per the University Records and Information Management Policy and Procedure, the Guidelines - Retention of VET Student Assessment Evidence, and the Retention & Disposal Schedule - Vocational Education and Training Services. Refer to the Guidelines - Retention of VET Student Assessment Evidence in the first instance.

a. The VET Team or assessor must retain documents for each VET unit, including:
b. Student Unit Guide;
c. Assessor Guide;
d. RPL Guides; and
e. Assessment tools.

Reviewing assessment

Annual Course Review

(59) In line with the VET Annual Course Review Procedure every VET course is subject to an annual review to determine the currency and effectiveness of the existing TAS and the corresponding assessment tools, practices and resources. During the review process, feedback from industry stakeholders and student results are considered, and amendments are made to the TAS and assessment tools if necessary. Professional development for VET lecturers is also considered during the review. Refer to the VET Course Registration Procedure for further information regarding amendments to VET courses.

Post-assessment validation

(60) Post-assessment validation is the quality review of a statistically valid sample of completed student assessments (including RPL), verifying that the assessment tools have produced valid, sufficient, authentic and current evidence for VET lecturers to make reasonable judgements as to whether the requirements of the VET unit of competency are met, and that assessment judgements are consistently applied.

(61) The University validates all VET courses on its scope of registration at least once every five years, with at least 50% of VET courses being validated within the first three years of the five-year cycle.

(62) The Post-assessment Validation Schedule (PAVS) is a master schedule for post-assessment activities that include all registered VET courses listed on the University's scope of registration. The schedule is updated when the University's scope of registration has been amended and approved through the CMS.

(63) Post-assessment validation of VET courses may occur more frequently if risk indicators, including those identified by the VET regulator, demonstrate that more frequent post-assessment validation is required. Risk factors may include, but are not limited to:

a. The ASQA Risk Assessment Framework;
b. Health and safety, licensing or legislative requirements;
c. Offshore or CRICOS delivery;
d. History of non-compliance, complaints, or concerns raised in the learner or VET lecturer feedback;
e. Rapid changes in relevant industry sectors and/or industry feedback;
f. Changes to the training product; and
g. Relevant feedback from VET students, trainers, assessors, and industry.

(64) All explicit (stand-alone) units of competency must be scheduled for post-assessment validation. Skill Sets and Vocational Training Programs (VTPs) can be selected dependent on specific risk indicators.

(65) A risk-based approach – informed by any risks to training outcomes, any changes to the training product or any feedback from VET students, trainers, assessors, and industry - is used to determine the VET assessment system components for a training product being validated, such as:

a. number of VET units of competency/modules to be chosen;
b. actual VET units of competency/modules chosen; and
c. sample size of students' assessments.

(66) The PAVS timeline for issuing student samples, VET assessment system components chosen, and subsequent reporting aligns with a calendar year and is grouped into four Sprints. PAVS samples are determined in January (Sprint 1), April (Sprint 2), July (Sprint 3), and October (Sprint 4).

a. The post-assessment validation sample is chosen from the population of students with an assessment judgement CA, NYC or RPL grade in the previous six (6) months.
b. At least two VET units of competency are chosen. One of the selected VET units must be inherent to the training package, not a generic VET unit such as communication or work, health, and safety. If the VET unit chosen has been assessed in a cluster, then the cluster assessment must be post-assessment validated.
c. A statistically valid sample will be chosen for each VET unit of competency or cluster, and the ASQA Assessment Validation Sample Size Calculator will be used to determine the sample size.

(67) The post-assessment validation team must include individuals who collectively meet the requirements specified by standard 1.5(2)(e) of the RTO Outcome Standards 2025:

a. industry competencies, skills and knowledge relevant to the training product;
b. a practical understanding of current industry practices relevant to the training product; and
c. one of the credentials for validation specified in the RTO Credential Policy 2025.

(68) Industry experts may also be involved in post-assessment validation to ensure a combination of expertise.

(69) The outcome of an assessment validation cannot be solely determined by a person who has designed or delivered the training or assessment.

(70) Rectifications and improvements identified in the validation must be documented in the VET Post-Assessment Validation Report form, accessible in the Quality Assurance Tile in the CMS. The report describes the improvement and rectification actions, timelines and responsibilities. These must be monitored by the VET Team Leader and signed off when complete. The Post-Assessment Validation Report form is actioned in the CMS and approved by the Senior TAFE Quality Manager or delegate.

(71) Improvements and rectifications identified must be applied across the whole course, as appropriate, resulting in revised and redeveloped assessment tools and practices. If major assessment amendments are made to assessment tools, the VET Team Leader must submit the full suite of assessment tools for the unit of competency to the VET Assessment Panel before approval is made at TAFE LTC and/or APC.

(72) Where non-compliances have been identified, a separate rectification plan will be implemented by the VET delivery team and submitted by the Senior TAFE Quality Manager to the Senior Regulatory Specialist VET in Academic Quality and Integrity.

(73) Additional requirements exist to validate all VET qualifications and skill sets from the Training and Education (TAE) training package. The TAE training products will be validated:

a. once the first cohort of VET students have completed their training and assessment; and

b. by a person who is independent, not employed or subcontracted by the university to provide training and assessment, and has no other involvement or interest in the organisation's operations.
c. The external validator must hold a qualification at the Diploma level or above from the TAE training package or any other diploma in adult education.

(74) Post-assessment validation reports are retained in accordance with the timeframe applicable to the PAVS.

Complaints

(75) A student who is not satisfied with the quality or delivery of the VET Course and its associated assessments, or believes they have experienced unfair treatment, can submit a complaint in accordance with the Complaints Policy - Students.

Section 6 - Non-Compliance

(76) Non-compliance with governance documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Employees or the Code of Conduct - Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct - Students.

(77) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(78) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	1st July 2025
Review Date	1st July 2028
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	5th June 2025
Expiry Date	20th October 2026
Responsible Executive	Louise King Provost
Implementation Officer	Lisa Papatraianou Deputy Provost
Enquiries Contact	Lisa Papatraianou Deputy Provost Teaching and Learning Connect

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.

"Governance document" - means policy or procedure published in the Governance Document Library. Policies and procedures are collectively called ‘governance documents’ and are often referred to as ‘policy’ or ‘University policy’.

"VET lecturer" - an employee of the University or a third-party partner who is a trainer and/or assessor for vocational education and training (VET) units of competency. VET lecturers include VET Team Leaders and higher education lecturers training or assessing in VET units.