Assessment POLICY & PROCEDURE



VERSION HISTORY

DATE	VERSION	AUTHOR	APPROVER	REVISION DESCRIPTION
15 Oct 2021	R1	VETR, John Price, VETNexus	Natalie Darby with delegated authority from Katrina Kirkwood	Re-did policy using the VETR template 'Assessment Services' & 'Example Reasonable Adjustments' sections. Added in Recognition Procedures as per suggestion from John Price.
13 July 2021	D1	VETNexus		Based on Assessment Policy and Procedure v3.0 and comments from Jack at VETNexus including adding in reference to relevant documents; assessments lodged online require an online declaration.

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1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Our assessment system ensures that assessment (including recognition of prior learning):

- Complies with the assessment requirements of the relevant training package or VET accredited course; and
- Is conducted in accordance with the Principles of Assessment and the Rules of Evidence.

We are committed to a rigorous assessment system which ensures:

- Assessment judgements are consistently made on a sound basis; and
- Validation of assessment judgements are carried out.

1.1 ABBREVIATIONS / 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 required in the workplace, as specified in a training package or a vocational education and training (VET) accredited course.
Assessment System	A coordinated set of documented policies and procedures (including assessment materials and tools) which ensure assessments are consistent and are based on the Principles of Assessment and the Rules of Evidence.
CEO	Chief Executive Officer of RTO as listed on www.training.gov.au
Direct evidence	Evidence which can be observed or witnessed by an assessor, including observation of workplace performance, oral questioning, demonstration, challenge test.
Experience Based Qualification (EBQ)	Another name for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) used within our organisation.
Formative assessment	Assists and supports learning by monitoring and advising participants of the quality of their performance and their rate of progress towards the achievement of the learning outcomes; provides feedback to the participant on what further development activities are needed to achieve the required competencies or learning outcomes.
LMS – Learning Management System	The Learning Management System is where participants are able to interact with their Skills Coach and perform tasks, such as uploading of assessment evidence and answering online quizzes. Examples include: Canvas and Sherpa.
Moderation	The process of establishing comparability of standards of performance across different courses, institutions or organisations, in order to ensure that the assessment is valid, reliable and fair. NCVER (2014) Glossary

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Mutual recognition	Recognition by an RTO of the AQF Qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by all other RTOs, thereby enabling national recognition of the Qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued to any person.
Participant	Any person enrolled in nationally recognised training undertaking nationally recognised assessment; may also be known as a candidate for assessment; an individual who is receiving, responding to and processing information in order to acquire and develop competence; this incorporates the processes of preparing and presenting for assessment by way of evidence portfolio.
Principles of assessment	Assessment events must be valid, reliable, flexible and fair.
Recognition Pathway	The pathway whereby a participant demonstrates their current competency in a unit of competence via the submission of an evidence portfolio and competency conversation; mapping evidence to the selected units of competence; no face-to-face learning options are applicable.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	An assessment process which assesses an individual's non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards for entry to, and/or partial or total completion of, a qualification. May also be referred to as EBQ.
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
RTO Management	RTO Leadership Team
Rules of evidence	Evidence must be current, sufficient, valid, and authentic.
Scope	Scope of Registration
Skills Coach	A trainer/assessor who delivers and assesses nationally recognised qualifications on behalf of the RTO.
SOA	Statement of Attainment
Standards	Standards for RTOs 2015

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SMS	Student Management System – information management system where administrative information about participants and courses (such as AVETMISS data and personal information) is stored and managed. For example, VETrak.
Summative assessment	A final determination of whether the intended outcome has been achieved and competency in either a unit of competence or full qualification is awarded.
Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS)	 Document issued by the RTO outlining the following: the course units underpinning course requirements such as language, literacy and numeracy requirements course delivery and assessment methods availability of qualification pathways logistical information where face to face delivery is a component
Training Product	Refers to AQF Qualification, Unit of Competence, or Skill set
UoC	Unit of Competency

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2 POLICY

2.1 GENERAL ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

Assessment approaches are always based on the performance of the individual participant. If assessment tasks are undertaken as a group, each participant is still assessed on each component of the assessment task.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is simply a form of assessment of a participant's competence. As such, recognition of prior learning is conducted with the same rigour as any other form of assessment. Where assessment is completed via recognition of prior learning, the requirements do not change, although the variety of evidence gathered and considered in making an assessment decision may be greater than through 'traditional' assessment activities.

Similarly, distance and online delivery methods may change the type of evidence considered, although the same requirements apply. Regardless of the mode of delivery or engagement, all assessment meets the same requirements.

For a participant to be assessed as competent, we ensure the participant demonstrates their:

- Ability to perform relevant tasks in a variety of workplace situations, or accurately simulated workplace situations;
- Understanding of what they are doing, and why, when performing tasks; and
- Ability to integrate performance with understanding, to show they are able to adapt to different contexts and environments.

All participants:

- Are assessed against all of the tasks identified in the elements of the unit or module;
- Demonstrate they are capable of performing these tasks to an acceptable level;
- Must demonstrate they hold all of the required skills and knowledge, as specified in the unit or module assessment requirements.

2.2 ASSESSMENT PLANNING

When planning assessment, we address all of the requirements of the unit or module. This does not mean separate assessment activities for each item, but that, as a whole assessment activities cover every area required. To achieve a 'competent' result, participants must meet all the requirements of the unit.

As similar requirements are often expressed in multiple units of competency, we often 'clusters' a number of units together for assessment to avoid repeating assessment of the same tasks.

2.3 SIMULATED WORK ENVIRONMENTS

When conducting training and assessment in a simulated workplace environment, we ensure that the simulated environment gives participants the opportunity to meet the following critical criteria:

- Quality The work is of the standard required for entry into the industry.
- Productivity The work is performed within a timeframe appropriate for entry to the industry.
- Safety The work is performed in a manner that meets industry safety standards.

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This approach ensures that participant are 'work ready' on successful completion of units of competency.

All simulations used provide opportunities for integrated assessment of competence that include coverage of the Dimensions of Competency:

- Performing the task (task skills);
- Managing a number of tasks (task management skills);
- Dealing with workplace irregularities such as unexpected problems, breakdowns and changes in routine (contingency management skills);
- Fulfilling the responsibilities and expectations of the job and workplace, including working with others (job/role environment skills); and
- Transferring competencies to new contexts.

Assessment activities are designed to be realistic and reasonable in terms of scale. Assessment conducted under simulated conditions therefore reflects those typically found in the workplace.

2.4 PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

We ensure the principles of fairness, flexibility, validity and reliability are met in all assessment approaches.

PRINCIPLE	HOW WE DO THIS
Fairness	The individual participant's needs are considered in the assessment process. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are applied to take into account the individual participant's needs. The participant is informed about the assessment processes and provided with the opportunity to challenge the result of the assessment and be reassessed if necessary, as per our Complaints and Appeals Policy and
	Procedure.
Flexibility	 Assessment is flexible to the individual participant by: Reflecting the participant's needs; Assessing competencies held by the participant no matter how or where 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.
Validity	 Assessment decisions are justified, based on the evidence of performance of the individual participant. Assessments against the unit/s of competency and the associated assessment requirements covers the broad range of skills and knowledge which are essential to competent performance. Assessment of knowledge and skills is integrated with their practical application. Assessments are based on evidence that demonstrates that a participant could demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other similar situations. Judgement of competence is based on evidence of participant performance which is aligned to the unit/s of competency and associated assessment requirements.

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Evidence presented for assessment is consistently interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment.

2.5 RULES OF EVIDENCE

We ensure the rules of validity, sufficiency, authenticity and currency are met in evidence collection approaches.

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

2.6 ASSESSMENT METHODS

Assessment methods are the particular technique/s used to gather different types of evidence. The different assessment methods used are outlined in the Training and Assessment Strategy for each program.

2.7 EXPERIENCE BASED QUALIFICATIONS (RPL)

We provide a process of recognition of prior learning (RPL) via Experience Based Qualifications (EBQ). This form of assessment of a participant's competence is based on the experience they have already gained in the workplace.

Recognition of prior learning is applied in the EBQ programs and uses evidence from formal, non formal and informal learning. This evidence is often combined with assessment activities sometimes known as 'challenge testing'.

2.8 DEVELOPING ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Specific Unit of Competency assessment documentation is prepared and used to ensure all training package and assessment requirements are met. We maintain resources available at all times for delivery of every training product on its scope of registration—whether the training product is currently being delivered or not. All resources comply with specific requirements in the relevant training package or accredited course.

An assessment tool includes the following components: the context and conditions for the assessment, the tasks to be administered to the participant, an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the participant and the evidence criteria used

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to judge the quality of performance (i.e. the assessment decision making rules). It also includes the administration, recording and reporting requirements.

Assessment Tools are, where possible, developed by us and tailored to the needs of each individual participant and group. When developing Assessment Tools, we use the information from the unit or module elements, performance criteria and assessment requirements to determine what competence looks like.

We use this information to set benchmarks for measuring the participant's performance using 'observable behaviours'. This approach ensures that, once a participant has completed the assessment tasks, the participant has:

- Actually undertaken all the required tasks; and
- Demonstrated their ability to do so in different contexts and environments.

Through the use of a Mapping document we confirm that resources are aligned to, and meet requirements of, national competency standards.

Approval of Assessment Tools undergo quality and approval processes as outlined in the *Quality and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure*.

2.9 USING OTHER PARTIES TO COLLECT EVIDENCE

Involving another party in the collection of evidence allows Assessors to gather authentic and valid evidence in difficult circumstances in a cost-effective way. This includes Manager Confirmation (workplace supervisor Third Party Report) for workplace-based participants.

It is common to use another party for evidence-gathering in cases where workplace evidence is required, but where it is not possible for the assessor to directly observe the participant at work. For example, in cases where:

- The presence of an observer may compromise workplace safety; or
- Where work activities involve issues of patient confidentiality and privacy.

The use of other people in collecting evidence is also a valuable strategy for collecting evidence of 'everyday performance' rather than performance carried out as part of the formal assessment process.

When using other parties to collect evidence, we ensure:

- That it is appropriate to involve another party in the collection of evidence; and
- The assessment processes lead to the collection of quality evidence.

We ensure sufficient guidance to both Assessors and the other party by:

- Providing assessors with comprehensive guidance about selecting the best person/s to collect evidence;
- Providing quality materials for collecting evidence;
- · Providing the other party with comprehensive information about their role in the evidence-gathering process;
- Obtaining confirmation that the other party understands their role in the process;
- 'Interpreting' training package and accredited course information to be relevant to the other party; and
- Setting requirements for assessors in confirming the authenticity of evidence provided by a participant.

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VERIFICATION OF APPROPRIATENESS OF OTHER PARTY

When we confirm the appropriateness of an individual in supporting the evidence collection process, the following items are considered and confirmed:

- The individual is not a relative or partner of the participant, nor have any other relationship with the participant that may present a conflict of interest
- The individual is a direct line supervisor or other valid role involving the participant who is an appropriate person to observe or report on the participant's performance
- Where prior credentials held by the individual are used as the basis for supporting appropriateness, these credentials are verified.
- Where the employment history of the individual is used as the basis for supporting appropriateness, this history is verified.

3 ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Each Skills Coach is responsible for the preparation, delivery and finalisation of their assessment activities. The following procedures apply to all training and assessment, assessment only and recognition (RPL) processes.

3.1 REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

It is important for Skills Coaches to take meaningful, transparent and reasonable steps to consult, consider and implement reasonable adjustments for participants with disability. Where participants have disabilities, Skills Coaches should spend time with them learning about what modifications might need to be made to the Assessment Tools or approach to make them more accessible for the individual needs of each participant.

Reasonable adjustments will be outlined in the Training and Assessment Strategy, within the Assessment tool itself or in an Individualised Learning and Assessment Plan, as outlined in the 'Participant Selection and Enrolment Policy and Procedure'.

Reasonable adjustments can be made to the way in which evidence of participant performance can be collected. Whilst reasonable adjustments can be made in terms of the way in which evidence of performance is gathered, the evidence criteria for making competent/not competent decisions should not be altered in any way. That is, the standards expected should be the same irrespective of the group and/or individual being assessed; otherwise comparability of standards will be compromised.

Skills Coaches must be familiar with, understand and maintain adherence to these assessment concepts and requirements as the assessment procedure is implemented. Reasonable adjustment examples are outlined below.

Participant has difficulty with	Examples of reasonable adjustments
Concentration	Breaking the assessment into appropriate components that can be undertaken separately Providing rest breaks during lengthy assessment sessions

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Participant has difficulty with	Examples of reasonable adjustments
	 Providing a separate assessment venue if the participant is distracted by others' movements or noise Providing additional time Providing alternative assessment methods, such as recording devices for oral testing, or telephone assessments Allowing the participant to provide evidence of having completed the assessment task at another venue; for example, an employer could verify satisfactory demonstration of competence
Expressing knowledge in writing	 Allowing oral assessment Providing a digital recorder, scribe Providing a sign language interpreter Providing additional time
Spelling and/or grammar	 Allowing oral assessment Providing a digital recorder, scribe Providing a sign language interpreter; Providing additional time; Providing a computer with a generic spelling and grammar checker, dictionary and thesaurus (such as those included in Microsoft® Word) or specialised literacy software (such as Spell Master or Read and Write Gold) Providing models and practical examples for the participant to demonstrate what they mean Providing alternative assessment methods, such as recorded interviews, slide presentations, photographic essays or models
Numbers and numerical concepts	 Allowing additional time Allowing the participant to use a calculator Providing other assistive technology, such as a talking calculator
Understanding spoken information or instructions	 Allowing additional time Providing written information or instructions to complement the spoken version Providing a sign language interpreter Allowing rest breaks or split sessions Using simple, direct language (plain English) Providing step-by-step instructions Repeating information given Paraphrasing to check for understanding Demonstration of what is required
Examination related- stress	 Additional time Rest breaks A separate examination venue Online assessment, or other assessment methods such as assignment or third-party evidence

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Participant has difficulty with	Examples of reasonable adjustments
The English language	 A computer with a spelling and grammar checker, dictionary and thesaurus Additional time Language interpreter
Maintaining writing posture for any length of time or writing quickly	 Digital recorder or similar; or a scribe Rest breaks and/or additional time Oral assessment A personal computer (if using a keyboard is preferable or more comfortable than writing by hand) Other assistive technology or equipment
Reading standard- sized print/handwriting	 Assistive technology such as magnifying devices to enlarge print or screen readers Braille examination papers (with tactile diagrams, maps) Oral assessment or recorded questions A reader Additional time Models, graphics or practical examples to illustrate questions Heavy lined paper
Hearing verbal information	 Facing the learner and speaking clearly (if a learner lip-reads) Producing all relevant information in writing/digital text Assistive technology/equipment Sign language interpreter Additional time
Physical tasks such as turning pages or using a computer mouse	 A disability support worker A personal assistant provided by the learner Alternative methods for demonstration of competence, for example, oral assessment or third-party evidence Assistive technology/equipment Additional time Alternative online questions where keyboard shortcuts can be used (i.e. drop down list instead of drag and drop)
Oral communication	 Additional time An interpreter A computer with voice synthesiser Reader of the learner's work.

3.2 ASSESSMENT PLAN

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Assessment arrangements are planned as a part of each Unit of Competency assessment process and outlined in the Training and Assessment Strategy (TAS).

The Skills Coach meets with the participant to:

- Explain the context and purpose of the assessment and the assessment process
- Explain the competency standards to be assessed and the evidence to be collected
- Outline the assessment procedure, the preparation which the participant should undertake, and answer any questions
- Seek feedback regarding the participant's understanding of the competency standards, evidence requirements and assessment process; and
- Determine if the participant is ready for assessment and, in consultation with the participant decide on the time and place of the assessment.

The Skills Coach must:

- Organise or confirm equipment or resources required to support the evidence gathering process
- · Coordinate and brief other personnel involved in the evidence gathering process (if required); and
- Access the latest version and use the correct assessment tool and Skills Coach Guide to gather sufficient and quality evidence about the participant's performance to make the assessment decision.

3.3 EVIDENCE COLLECTION

For each Unit of Competency (and each element within the unit), it is a requirement that all assessments maintain at a minimum, multiple types of appropriate evidence to verify the participant's competence, which address the assessment requirements.

At least one of these evidence pieces should be a form of direct evidence (it should be noted that evidence pieces may overlap elements and units within the qualification).

Skills Coaches, when deeming a participant competent, must have judged evidence collected to also have met the requirement of the dimensions of competency and be certain that the participant can transfer the skills and knowledge covered into new work situations.

3.4 ASSESSMENT DECISION

The Skills Coach must:

- Oversee the evidence gathering process to ensure its validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility;
- Collect appropriate evidence and assess this against assessment requirements;
- Incorporate allowable adjustments to the assessment procedure without compromising the integrity of the competencies (if required);
- Evaluate the evidence in terms of validity, consistency, currency, authenticity and sufficiency;
- Record details of evidence collected and of outcome of each assessment task (Satisfactory or Not Yet Satisfactory);
- On the conclusion of the evidence collection process for the Unit of Competency, make a judgement about competency based on the evidence and record the unit outcome.

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3.5 PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

The Skills Coach must provide advice to the participant about the outcomes of the assessment process. This includes providing the participant with:

- Clear and constructive feedback on the assessment decision
- Information on ways of overcoming any identified gaps in competency revealed by the assessment the opportunity to discuss the assessment process and outcome information on reassessment and the appeals processes; and
- An opportunity for reassessment if appropriate or requested by the participant

3.6 COMPLETING ASSESSMENT RECORDS

As assessment evidence is collected and reviewed, the assessment process is documented on an Assessment Tool. Each Assessment Tool is designed for a specific target group and assessment conditions & context. The resource highlights assessment activities, resources required, any pre or co-requisites and evidence requirements including decision making rules for the assessment.

The assessor must:

- Record the assessment outcome on the required assessment documents and/or in the Learning Management System (LMS)
- Follow the instructions in the Skills Coach Guide related to the processing of assessment documents; and
- Maintain the confidentiality of the assessment outcome.

All nationally recognised course programs require assessment evidence to be retained on the participant's file for each Unit of Competency. Records are maintained and destroyed according to our *Record Retention Policy and Procedure*.

3.7 CREDIT TRANSFER

- Participant requests mutual recognition of units of competency and/or modules awarded to them by another RTO or AQF authorised issuing organisation.
- We will request to sight the original certification document(s), a certified copy of the certification document(s), or authenticated VET transcript issued by the Student Identifiers Registrar (i.e. USI Transcript) from the participant. Certified copies will be kept in participant enrolment file.
- We will check whether the submitted evidence is authentic, complete and compliant with the AQF and Training Package requirements. Where a participant has completed a unit of competence which has a different title or code from the one where credit is sought, we will for an agreed fee, establish equivalency either by confirming equivalence on the National Register of VET or by using mapping documents contained within the training package.
- Where unit codes and names are exact, record of mutual recognition is entered into the Student Management System (SMS) and Credit Transfer result applied to the relevant units of competence.
- Participant is notified of result and/or pathway.

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3.8 EXPERIENCE BASED QUALIFICATION (EBQ) AKA RPL

- 1. Participant requests to access an Experience Based Qualification (EBQ) via recognition pathway. Client scoping and qualification matching occurs to explore client or participant learning and development needs, support requirements, roles, foundation skill levels, internal training and infrastructure. Job description, task lists, skills trees/ladders, workforce learning and development plans, internal training and development programs are matched and mapped to appropriate qualification. Outcomes and findings from scoping activities identify relevant qualification, internal entry requirements and support plans for enrolling participants.
- 2. Where a participant decides that they do not wish to apply to access an EBQ, or it is identified that they are not a suitable candidate for EBQ, possible alternatives are discussed; such as accessing learning and assessment pathways, or alternative qualifications better suited to their skill set.
- 3. Upon receipt of enrolment documentation, a Skills Coach is allocated to the participant and a 'Getting Started Conversation' scheduled. Unit selection, learning need requirements and customised training plan are explored during this conversation. Qualification resources and agreed Training Plan information are then forwarded to the participant as the EBQ journey begins. Skill Coaches will be qualified according to our *Competency and PD Policy and Procedure*.
- 4. Participants collate their work sample documentation and submit to their Skills Coach for assessment. On the job skills observations and competency conversations are scheduled with the participant, with real world evidence being documented and assessed by their Skills Coach.
- 5. Participants have the right to appeal any assessment decision awarded; details on how to appeal are outlined in *Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure* on our website. They are also summarised in the Participant Handbook. A participant is afforded two (2) opportunities to resubmit their evidence for assessment at no cost to the participant. A third attempt may be granted at the discretion of RTO Management.
- 6. Feedback is sought according to our *Continuous Improvement Policy*.
- 7. EBQ evidence is validated and moderated according to our *Validation Policy and Procedure*.

3.9 RESULT CODES

The following Unit of Competency result codes and definitions are the common codes used to record results in documentation and in the SMS.

S – Satisfactory	This means you have met all requirements for this assessment task and achieved the performance standard. Well done!
NYS – Not Yet Satisfactory	This means you have not met the performance standard for this assessment task, or further information or explanation is required. Feedback will be provided to help you to have another try

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RPL Granted	CELEBRATE! You have successfully demonstrated previous skills and knowledge in this unit of competency and have been granted Recognition of Prior Learning
RPL Not Granted	Don't worry, this result just means that you need a bit more time to build the skills required for this unit of competency. Your Skills Coach will develop a plan to help you build the required skills and knowledge
Competent	CELEBRATE! You have shown that you have demonstrated the skills and knowledge required to successfully complete the unit of competency
Not Competent	You have not demonstrated the fundamental requirements of the unit of competency. Your Skills Coach will provide you with feedback on the next steps.

4 REFERENCES

- Australian Skills Quality Authority (2015) "User's Guide Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015"
- Australian Skills Quality Authority (2015) "Fact Sheet Guide to Developing Assessment Tools'
- NCVER (2002) "Maximising Confidence in Assessment Decision-Making Resource Kit for Assessors'
- Department of Employment Small Business and Training QLD Government (July 2018) 'Reasonable Adjustment in teaching, learning and assessment for learners with disability. A guide for VET practitioners. v2'. Under Creative Commons license 4.0 Nov 2010