

## Assessment Policy - VET

**Policy Code:** ACA-004    **Version:** 7.0    **Effective Date:** 10 March 2017

### Purpose:

To outline the College's assessment framework and the general principles that guide the College's assessment practices for its Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses. The policy aims to promote transparent, equitable and accountable assessment practices and justifiable quality outcomes.

**Definition of “College”** – *The Australian College of Natural Medicine Pty Ltd (ACNM) trades as Endeavour College of Natural Health, FIAFitnation, College of Natural Beauty and Wellnation. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to ‘College’ or ‘the College’ should be considered a reference to each or any of these respective trading names.*

- Scope:**
- All campuses
  - All VET academic staff
  - All VET students
  - All Student Services staff

### Policy Statement:

Assessment is the process of gathering and analysing information in order to guide and make judgements about students' competency in relation to learning goals. Assessment items are an integral part of the learning process and when well-designed can enhance the overall learning experience and contribute to student achievement.

The College adheres to Standard 1, Clause 1.8 of the [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015](#) which requires that assessment is conducted in accordance with the [Principles of Assessment](#) and the [Rules of Evidence](#). Assessment items are designed in accordance with the Assessment Guidelines of the relevant Training Package.

This policy focusses on assessments conducted as part of the day-to-day training delivered by the College. Students who are seeking an assessment via Recognition of Prior Learning should refer to the [Educational Pathways Policy – VET](#).

## Principles of Assessment

Principles of Assessment are required to ensure quality outcomes. They are defined in the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 as being **fair, flexible, valid** and **reliable** as below:

- 1. Fair:** Fairness requires consideration of the individual student's needs and characteristics, and any reasonable adjustments that needs to be applied to take account of these needs and characteristics. It requires clear communication between the assessor and the student to ensure that the student is fully informed about the assessment; understands what the assessment requires; is able to participate in the assessment process; and agrees that the process is appropriate. It also includes an opportunity for the student being assessed to challenge the result of the assessment and be reassessed if necessary.
- 2. Flexible:** To be flexible assessments should reflect the student's needs; provide for recognition of competencies no matter how, where or when they have been acquired; and draw on a range of appropriate assessment methods for the student, unit of competency and it's assessment requirements.
- 3. Valid:** Assessments are considered valid when a student's evidence is assessed against the broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential to competent performance, and any other associated assessment requirements of a specific unit of competency. Assessing must also include evidence that a student could demonstrate these skills and knowledge in other similar circumstances and skills and knowledge can be practically applied.
- 4. Reliable:** Reliability is when the assessment is consistently interpreted and assessment results are comparable irrespective of the assessor conducting the assessment item.

## Rules of Evidence

Rules of evidence are closely related to the Principles of Assessment and are also defined in the Standards. The rules provide guidance on the collection of evidence to ensure that it is **valid, sufficient, authentic** and **current**.

- 1. Valid:** see Principles of assessment.
- 2. Sufficient:** Sufficiency relates to the quality and quantity of evidence assessed. It requires collection of enough appropriate evidence to ensure that all aspects of

competency have been satisfied and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly. Supplementary sources of evidence may be necessary. The specific evidence requirements of each unit of competency provide advice on sufficiency.

3. **Authentic:** To accept evidence as authentic, an assessor must be assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the students own work.
4. **Current:** Currency relates to the age of the evidence presented by students to demonstrate that they are still competent. Competency requires demonstration of current performance, so the evidence must be from either the present or the very recent past.

## Qualified Assessors

The College ensures that it's assessors meet the requirements of the Standards and therefore demonstrate:

- that they hold the relevant Training and Education (TAE) competencies or are working in collaboration with an assessor who does;
- that they hold relevant vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed or are working in collaboration with an assessor who does;
- industry currency directly relevant to the training/assessment being undertaken;
- continuous development of their VET knowledge and skills as well as their industry currency and competence as an assessor.

## Results

The recognised training and assessment approach in the VET sector is competency-based. This means there is an emphasis on what a person can do in the workplace as a result of completing a course of training.

The following table identifies the results awarded for VET students at the College:

Satisfactory	S	Awarded to a student who has demonstrated that they are competent to the specified standard against each of the elements being assessed.
Not Yet Satisfactory	NYS	Awarded to a student who has failed to demonstrate that they are competent to the specified standard against each of the elements being assessed.
Competent	C	Awarded to a student who has achieved all of the elements specified for a unit of competency to the specified standard.
Not Yet Competent	NYC	Awarded to a student who has failed to achieve all of the elements specified for that unit of competency to the specified standard.

Withdrawn	W	Relates to when a student withdraws from a unit of competency/unit of study before the census date.
Withdrawn Fail	WF	Relates to when a student withdraws from a unit of competency/unit of study after the census date.
Credit Transfer	CT	Relates to the credit received by a student for a unit of competency through recognition of their formal learning.
Recognition of Prior Learning	RPL	Relates to the credit received by a student for a unit of competency through recognition of their informal learning.

Students enrol into a Unit of Study. Each Unit of Study may contain one or more units of competency. Students will receive a result for each unit of competency. Students will be made aware of the competencies to be assessed for each Unit of Study via the Unit of Study Outline (USO).

### **Assessment of Elements**

Effective workplace performance requires more than an isolated instance of applying technical skills, knowledge and attitudes to a particular situation. Students are therefore considered to be competent when they are able to apply their knowledge and skills to successfully complete activities in a range of situations and environments. As such, it is likely that a unit of competency will assess some elements more than once across multiple assessment items. In order to achieve a result for an assessment item of Satisfactory, a student must demonstrate competence for every element assessed. Similarly, to achieve an overall result of Competent for a unit of competency, a student must receive a result of Satisfactory for each assessment item.

### **Assessing Competence**

Each assessment item will outline the specified standard that a student must achieve to receive a result of Satisfactory. This will vary between assessment items dependent on the most appropriate method of assessing skills and knowledge. For instance, a theory assessment may require a student to achieve an overall mark of 40/50 but a practical assessment may require demonstration of a technique that the assessor will judge against a set of steps/outcomes.

### **Additional Assessment Criteria**

In addition to each element being assessed as competent, some units of competency may require additional criteria to be met for a student to achieve a result of Competent. This additional criteria will be outlined in the Unit of Study Outline and may include requirements

for attendance, participation, dress code, submission of all assessment items and any other criteria documented.

### **Notification of Results**

Notification timeframes for individual assessment items will vary but will be generally be no longer than 2-3 weeks from the final submission deadline for that assessment item. Students will normally receive the results of practical assessment items either immediately upon completion or it may take 2-3 weeks if further contemplation is required.

Final results will be held pending any fee payments/library fines being finalised.

## **Submission of Assessment Items**

Excepting assessment items completed in class, it is the responsibility of all students to keep a copy of all submitted assessment items until they are marked and returned by the trainer/assessor for review. After a student has reviewed their marked assessment item they must return it to their Trainer as the College is required to retain all assessment items for a set period of time (refer to [Assessment Retention](#)).

### **Paper-based Submission**

All paper-based assessment items other than those completed in class (i.e. quizzes) must include a completed and signed [Assignment Cover Sheet/Statement of Authorship](#) and be handed or posted to the Trainer for that particular unit of study by the due date indicated in the Unit of Study Outline unless prior alternative arrangements have been made in accordance with the [Special Circumstances Policy - VET](#).

Where an assessment item involves completion as a group, an [Assignment Cover Sheet/Statement of Authorship](#) must be completed and signed by all students involved in completing the assessment item.

The [Assignment Cover Sheet/Statement of Authorship](#) contains important information about privacy, plagiarism and academic dishonesty, must be carefully read before signing and is available from the [Policies and Procedures & Forms link](#) on the College website.

### **Electronic Submission**

All assessment items that are submitted electronically should be submitted online via the College's Learning Management System (LMS). Students will not be able to submit their assessment item until they have read, understood and agreed to a set of terms in relation to privacy, plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

Assessments must be submitted by the specified due date indicated in the Unit of Study Outline unless prior alternative arrangements have been made either as below or via the [Special Circumstances Policy - VET](#).

In the unusual event of a technical failure, if a student is unable to submit their assessment item via the LMS, they are required to contact the LMS Support staff. If there is a system error with the LMS that won't be resolved until after the assessment due date, the LMS Support staff will advise the Trainer that extensions are required for the entire class. If the technical failure is a personalised problem for an individual student, the student must contact their Trainer via the Quality Feedback Monitor to request an extension. No extensions will be granted for electronic submission unless a prior alternative arrangement has been made.

### **Number of Attempts**

Students will be permitted a total of 3 attempts for all assessment items within a teaching period (initial attempt plus 2 resubmissions/resits) – refer also to the [Academic Progression Policy – VET](#) or [Course Duration and Progress Policy - International](#). Some assessment items are broken down into distinct activities and therefore if a student is unable to achieve a Satisfactory result for one activity or more, it is at the discretion of the Trainer as to whether the student must resubmit the entire assessment item or only the activities where a Satisfactory result was not achieved.

Fees may apply for resits/resubmissions as determined by the qualification a student enrolls into (refer to [Fees Policy – VET](#) or [Fees Policy - International](#) as well as information published on the College's website).

### **Timeliness**

It is the student's responsibility to manage their individual study and assessment workload to ensure they are able to attend all on-campus assessment items (i.e. practical examinations) and meet all relevant submission due dates. Assessment must be submitted within the timeframes specified unless there is an extraordinary circumstance that prevents the student from meeting the deadline. The timeframes for all assessment items are advised to students upfront on commencement of a Unit of Study.

### **Practical Assessments**

In cases where a student is unable to attend a practical examination at the scheduled time, they must advise their Trainer as soon as they are aware of this so that an alternate time can be scheduled. Any missed practical examination time (whether the Trainer is advised or otherwise) will count as an attempt and will result in a grade of NYS for that attempt. Any rescheduled practical examination time will count as a resit. If a student then receives a result

of NYS for their first resit, they will be afforded one final resit (3 attempts in total). It is the responsibility of the student to make themselves available at the time that the trainer reschedules their practical examination – rescheduling is not a negotiation process between trainer and student.

In the event that a practical examination is scheduled towards the end of a teaching period, there will be limited time available to schedule one or more re-sits prior to the deadline for trainers to finalise results (results must be finalised one week after the end of a teaching period). As such, students may receive an interim result of ‘Incomplete’ for the Unit of Study until their assessment result can be finalised. Results of ‘Incomplete’ will be either replaced with a result of C or NYC upon completion of the outstanding assessment item or before census date for the following teaching period. If a student is aware of their unavailability prior to census date they should consider either withdrawing from the Unit of Study without penalty, changing to another class time or swapping to another Unit of Study (refer to the [Add, Drop or Swap Subject Form](#) or [Add, Drop or Swap Subject Form - International](#)).

### Written Assessments

If a first attempt at a written assessment item is not submitted by the due date, the student will receive a result of NYS for that attempt unless prior arrangements have been made. This means that any late submissions will be considered to be a resubmission. If a student fails to discuss a revised due date with their trainer, they will be given 1 week from the original due date to submit their first resubmission before they are resulted with a NYS against a second attempt. If no assessment item is received after 1 week of the due date, the student will be given one additional week to make their final submission of the item (unless prior arrangements are made) before receiving a NYS result for their third attempt at that assessment item (and therefore a result of NYC for the unit of competency/unit of study overall).

### **‘At Risk’ Students**

If a student fails to submit the same assessment item more than once in a teaching period, this is an early warning signal to their trainer that they may be at risk of non-progression and non-completion in accordance with the [Academic Progression Policy – VET](#) or the [Course Duration and Progress Policy - International](#). It is the responsibility of the trainer to make every attempt to contact the student to determine their reasons for non-submission. It may then be necessary to provide support to the student to aid in their progression. Any support mechanisms should be instigated on the advice of the Student Services team and be made in accordance with College Policies.

### **Student Integrity (e.g. cheating and plagiarism)**

Students are accountable to standards of professionalism and ethics throughout their course of study and therefore the College takes a strong position on plagiarism and other instances of academic dishonesty. All students should ensure that their assessment work is their own and that they have not obtained academic advantage for themselves or another student by dishonest or unfair means. Refer to the [Plagiarism, Cheating and Collusion Policy – VET](#) for further details.

### **Information about Assessment Items**

All necessary information about assessment items is listed in the Unit of Study Outline. The trainer/assessor for that unit of study must check that the provided information is correct.

Information about assessment is generally not changed after the second week of the trimester. However, in special circumstances such as in the case of information being incorrect, the details may be changed with approval by the relevant senior trainer/head of department and all students must be notified of the change.

### **Feedback for Students**

Students receive specific, timely, supportive, constructive and developmental feedback on their learning and performance. Written feedback should be provided to students on all assessment items other than multiple choice tests.

Students are entitled to see their results for all assessment items within two weeks from the date that the assessment item was due.

Formative assessment does not require formal feedback from trainers, and alternative forms of providing feedback can be used, e.g. group and peer marking and self-marking from a supplied answer guide.

### **Return of Assessment Items**

Where a student has completed an assessment item that warrants written feedback from the trainer, the student will have the opportunity to review their result and the feedback within 2-3 weeks of the assessment item due date. On-campus students will normally have their assessment item returned to them for review in class whilst online students will likely receive their feedback via the LMS. Assessment items will not be returned to students for them to keep, only for review (refer to [Assessment Retention](#) for further information).

## Appealing a Result

The College acknowledges that students have the right to appeal an assessment decision, based on valid grounds for appeal. The College has provision for students to appeal against assessment decisions. The College ensures that students have access to a fair and equitable process for lodging an appeal against an assessment decision.

Valid grounds for an appeal against an assessment decision (where the client feels the assessment decision is incorrect) could include the following:

- a) The judgement as to whether competency has been achieved and demonstrated was made incorrectly;
- b) The judgement was not made in accordance with the Assessment Plan;
- c) Alleged bias of the assessor;
- d) Alleged lack of competence of the assessor;
- e) Alleged wrong information from the assessor regarding the assessment process;
- f) Alleged inappropriate assessment process for the particular competency;
- g) Faulty or inappropriate equipment; and/or
- h) Inappropriate conditions.

Students wishing to appeal a grade need to meet with the Senior Trainer and Assessor in the first instance as outlined within the Grievance Policy VET ([Refer to Grievance Policy- VET](#)).

An investigation into an appeal may result in one of the following outcomes:

- a) Appeal is upheld; in this event the following options will be available:
  - i. The original assessment will be re-assessed, potentially by another assessor.
  - ii. Appropriate recognition will be granted.
  - iii. A new assessment shall be conducted/arranged.
- b) Appeal is rejected/ not upheld; in accordance with Endeavour assessment policy the client will be required to:
  - i. undertake further training or experience prior to further assessment; or
  - ii. re-submit further evidence; or
  - iii. submit/undertake a new assessment.

If a student receives a result for an assessment item that they disagree with, they have the right to lodge a grievance in accordance with the College's [Grievance Policy – VET](#).

## Reasonable Adjustment/Access and Equity

Assessment tasks may be subject to reasonable adjustment where a student has a specific disability or special need as per the College's [Access and Equity Program](#). Any student who has special needs may be eligible for reasonable adjustment and should speak with the Access and Equity Officer on campus at the time of enrolment to receive advice on available services and to complete the required documentation. Reasonable adjustments will only be considered if advised at the time of enrolment and/or if a student's situation changes mid-enrolment and they advise their campus Access and Equity Officer prior to the assessment item due date.

## Special Circumstances

The College recognises that there may be times when a decision made upon application of this policy (or other related policies) may require reassessment due to special circumstances. The College must be satisfied that a student's circumstances are beyond their control (i.e. if a situation occurs which a reasonable person would consider is not due to the student's action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which the person is not responsible).

If a student feels after review of the [Special Circumstances Policy - VET](#) that their circumstances should be considered, they must submit an application prior to the due date for the assessment item. In rare situations where this is not possible, applications will be accepted until three days after the scheduled due date.

## Assessment Retention

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) as the National VET Regulator requires all registered training organisations (RTO's) to securely retain all completed student assessment items for each student for a period of six months from the date on which the judgement of competence for the student was made. Where it is not possible to retain the student's actual work (i.e. practical assessments), an assessor's completed marking guide, criteria and observation checklist for each student should be retained as evidence.

In addition to the above requirement, the College retains all completed assessment items for a period of 12 months to allow time for internal moderation processes to run their course.

## Validation and Moderation of Assessment

The College is committed to ensuring that regardless of the place of delivery, mode of delivery or trainer/assessor:

- a. assessment items are developed to be fair, flexible, reliable and valid based on current industry relevance and the requirements of the Training Package; and
- b. judgements made by trainers/assessors on attempted assessment items are based on valid, sufficient, authentic and current evidence.

The [Validation and Moderation Policy – VET](#) outlines the processes in place to ensure the high quality of assessment items and the consistency of marking by all trainers/assessors.

## Related Procedures:

Not Applicable

### 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 expected in the workplace, as expressed by the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards of a Training Package or by the learning outcomes of a VET accredited course.

**Competency** – the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.

**Elements** – essential outcomes required to demonstrate competency as detailed in each unit of competency.

**Formative Assessment** – a form of assessment that does not count towards the final result for a unit of competency but is rather used as an informal strategy to gauge a student's the level of understanding of skills and knowledge.

**National Skills Standards Council (NSSC)** - a committee of the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE). The NSSC provides advice to SCOTESE on national standards for regulation of vocational education and training.

**Reasonable adjustment** - adjustments that can be made to the way in which evidence of candidate 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 yet competent decisions (and/or awarding grades) 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.

**Specified Standard** – the level of competency required for effective performance in the workplace, often expressed in outcome terms such as “*effective technique used to.....*”. Could also be expressed as a percentage mark.

**Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015** – a set of national standards which are used to regulate the vocational education and training sector within Australia.

**Student** - is an individual person who is formally enrolled to study at the College. The individual person is that who appears on the College’s documents such as enrolment, admission and payment documents, and who is assigned an individual student ID.

**Teaching Period** – is a formal term (trimester or online intake) within the teaching year in which a student may be enrolled.

**Training Package** - A training package is a set of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications for recognising and assessing people's skills in a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise. They are developed by national Industry Skills Councils (ISCs).

**Training Package Assessment Guidelines** - are contained within each Training Package and are designed to ensure that assessment is consistent with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

**Unit of Competency** - the specification of industry knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance expected in the workplace.

**Unit of Study Outline** – detail what will be taught and assessed in a Unit of Study. It enables all assessment tasks to be mapped against the required elements from each unit of competency.

## Further Information:

### Related Policies:

Educational Pathways Policy – VET

Plagiarism, cheating and Collusion Policy - VET

Fees Policy – VET

Fees Policy - International

Academic Progression Policy – VET

Course Duration and Progress Policy - International

Grievance Policy – VET

Special Circumstances Policy - VET

Validation and Moderation Policy – VET

### Benchmarking:

Think: Colleges, Taronga Training Institute, Skilled Up, QIBT

**Supporting Research and Analysis:** Not Applicable

**Related Documents:** [ASQA General Direction: Retention requirements for completed student assessment items](#)  
[Assignment Cover Sheet/Statement of Authorship](#)  
[Add, Drop or Swap Subject Form](#)  
[Add, Drop or Swap Subject Form - International](#)  
[Access and Equity Handbook](#)

**Related Legislation:** [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015](#)

**Guidelines:** Training Package Assessment Guidelines (*specific to the Training Package in use*)

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<b>Recommending Body:</b>	VET Advisory Board Meeting Date: 13 November 2013
<b>Approval Body:</b>	College Council Meeting Date: 6 December 2013
<b>Policy Status:</b>	Revised – separated out from Higher Education Policy
<b>Responsibilities for Implementation:</b>	Director, VET Operations Director, Aesthetics Education General Manager, VET Health General Manager, Fitness All VET Trainers
<b>Key Stakeholders:</b>	Director, VET Operations Director, Aesthetics Education General Manager, VET Health General Manager, Fitness All VET Trainers All VET Students