

Validation and Moderation Policy – VET

Policy Code: ACA-031 **Version:** 3.0 **Effective Date:** 18 March 15

Purpose:

This policy specifies the College's validation and moderation philosophy and the general principles that guide the College's validation and moderation practices for Vocational Education and Training (VET). This policy is designed to ensure the College's VET courses comply with the Australian Skills Quality Authority's (ASQA) *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* including Clauses 1.9, 1.10, and 1.11.

The purpose is to ensure thorough and rigorous assessment practices and results, via a comprehensive plan of systematic validation. The College uses a risk-based approach to developing the plan considering risk indicators such as the potential safety concerns to clients from an assessment outcome that is not valid, the mode of delivery, changes to training packages and/or licensing requirements.

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 students, staff and student services staff

Background Principles

Validation and moderation embraces continuous improvement of the College's strategies, resources and staff.

The College uses the following industry recognised principles determined by the National Quality Council (NQC) and upheld by the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC) to underpin the policy, procedure and guidelines.

Transparent - The purpose, process and implications of the validation and/or moderation should be transparent to all relevant stakeholders.

Representative - A representative sample should be used to validate and/or moderate tools and judgements.

Confidential - Information regarding individuals (i.e. assessors and candidates) and providers must be treated with sensitivity and discretion. Confidentiality should be observed in relation to the identity of the assessors (i.e. those who developed the tools and/or made the judgements) and candidates (i.e. those whose evidence is submitted in the process).

Educative - Validation and/or moderation should form an integral rather than separate part of the assessment process. It should provide constructive feedback, which leads to continuous improvement.

Equitable - Validation and/or moderation must be demonstrably fair, equitably applied and unbiased.

Tolerable - Any assessment includes a margin of error. The way in which evidence is gathered and interpreted against the standards will vary. The challenge is to limit the variation to acceptable proportions. Validation and/or moderation enables the variation to be identified and limited to what is tolerable.

Include external parties - Regularly recorded meetings with Industry advisors and experts focusing on quality reviews to provide tangible outcomes and recommendations for future improvements.

Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence

The College follows the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence to provide quality outcomes. These are defined in the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 (the Standards).

Principles of Assessment

Principles of Assessment are required to ensure quality outcomes. They are defined in the Standards as being **fairness, flexibility, validity and reliability**, as detailed in the College's [Assessment Policy – VET](#).

Rules of Evidence

Rules of Evidence are closely related to the Principles of Assessment. The rules provide guidance on the collection of evidence to ensure **validity, sufficiency, authenticity and currency**, as detailed in the College's [Assessment Policy – VET](#).

Context

The College recognises that as a VET provider it is accountable to the health industry to provide job ready graduates for employers and clients. Those employers and clients have particular expectations of VET providers, not the least of which is to produce graduates who are able to contribute in meaningful ways as health providers to the market. Students are expected to master a rapidly growing body of specialised knowledge, develop generic, transferable skills for immediate use in the health industry and meet professional requirements for registration and practice. Within this landscape, the College must respond to the market demand, changes in regulation, professional requirements, industry imperatives and societal change.

The College is a specialised institution committed to providing education and training in natural health, fitness and natural beauty. The College's VET focus is holistic in terms of its knowledge base, philosophy and professional approach, and therefore requires a holistic approach to course and curriculum design. Curriculum decision-making, therefore, must be informed by such an approach as well as academic standards and excellence, and fit clearly within the objectives of the College's mission and strategic plan.

Quality Assurance

The procedure associated with this policy is based on the Plan-Implement-Evaluate-Review (PIER) model of quality assurance as outlined in the [Quality and Compliance Policy](#).

As part of the quality assurance practices associated with validation and moderation, trainers

and assessors are required to maintain their [Professional Development Portfolio](#) to provide evidence of their ongoing improvement and education within the industry and chosen fields of delivery.

The strategy for validation is to be reviewed periodically as per the [Validation Schedule VET](#) to document the strategies already occurring in the College and to help plan useful assessment validation. This is carried out using the [Validation Strategies Checklist](#).

Application of this Policy

This policy applies to all ‘*samples*’, which are samples of assessment resources and de-identified samples of student evidence. These samples compiled by the College for a validation or moderation review must be handled in a professional manner ensuring the anonymity of trainers and assessors, students and graduates is maintained in an ethical manner.

The time taken for validation or moderation will differ dependent on the activities conducted. It is essential that the purpose of a validation activity are clear to all involved parties and that validation activities are not used for purposes other than those stated in this policy and the associated procedure and guidelines.

Each Delivery and Assessment Strategy (DAS) must include validation and moderation practices as outlined by this policy. The DAS should include a brief outline of the process to be followed along with persons responsible and scheduling.

Periodic reviews of the [Validation Strategies](#) are to be planned via the [Validation Schedule VET](#) and executed by the appropriate Director for the VET Health, Beauty or Fitness pillars.

Exclusions in Application of this Policy

For those qualifications with monthly online enrolments, the College recognises that it may be difficult to organise timely moderation consensus meetings to finalise results for a particular teaching period. Under such circumstances, the review of the tools and/or candidate evidence post assessment may be an option for assuring continuous improvement and needs to be approved by the National Compliance Manager and/or the VET Advisory Board.

Validation and Moderation Sessions

Internal Validation

Sessions are to be held at least annually for each pillar. These sessions can occur at any time throughout a teaching period with the aim for sessions to be held around Week 10 of a trimester for the following trimester, before final results are released.

The internal validation sessions require a selection of trainers and assessors and other key staff members to act as validators and analyse and review a full sample of tools from at least 1 unit of competency, either specific to a Unit of Study in a pillar or a shared unit of competency across pillars. The outcomes of these sessions are to be recorded.

The samples will be collected from qualifications across a variety of campuses with a focus on reviewing tools and, *if available*, candidate evidence to make recommendations for future improvements.

The process requires validators to review and assess the Delivery and Assessment Strategy, course content, delivery and assessment tools, qualification structure and delivery methods as relevant to industry standards and the Units of Study that the competencies sit within. Samples will include student RPL evidence and RPL assessor judgements.

The outcome of validation may result in alterations to tools only by following due process for approval from the Director of the relevant pillar/s.

External Validation

These sessions are an optional annual event at the discretion of the CEO. External validation will be conducted by carefully selected industry advisors (validators) and may require them to review and assess the Delivery and Assessment Strategy, course content, delivery and assessment tools, qualification structure and delivery methods as relevant to industry standards and the Units of Study that the competencies sit within.

The outcomes of external validation may result in alterations to tools only by following due process for approval from the Director of the relevant pillar/s.

Moderation

Sessions are an internal event for each pillar and can occur at any time throughout a teaching period for identified issues within assessment items. Annual moderation sessions aim to be held towards the end of the assessment process around Week 15 of a teaching period, when

judgements of candidate evidence have been made, but prior to the final recording and reporting of results of cohorts as per the [Validation Schedule VET](#).

Moderation requires a selection of internal assessors (moderators) to review a full sample of judged candidate evidence from at least 10 students or 5% (whichever is greater) of submitted assessments from at least one modality specific Unit of Competency per course; a shared Unit of Competency across pillars may also be included for review.

The samples will be collected across all cohorts, qualifications, and Units of Competency across pillars. The samples will be sourced from a variety of campuses and may be conducted for a different trimester cohort each year. Moderation will focus on regulating the assessment process and judgements of candidate evidence across a broad range of Units of Competency with varying student results. This is achieved by reviewing anonymous assessor judgements; the marking of student's completed assessment items; and the assessment tools used to assist, qualify or enable the assessor judgements.

The outcome of moderation may result in the alteration to student grades only by Senior Trainer/Assessors following due process for approval by the Director of the relevant pillar/s.

Samples for Validation or Moderation

Samples are compiled of tools and/or judged candidate evidence including RPL and from a broad range of competency and results. Samples are to be prepared by the trainers/assessors with the required forms for each piece of candidate evidence or assessment tool, for the facilitator to de-identify.

The required amount for each validation or moderation session will vary based on the sizes of the cohorts for each unit of study.

Validator & Moderator Selection

The validation and moderation teams as outlined within the procedure are comprised of academic and non-academic staff members including support staff for trainer/assessors. The composition of the teams ensures objective analysis of the assessment item/s.

Collectively the persons as validators or moderators must have:

- The vocational competencies and current industry skills relevant to the assessment;

- Current knowledge and skills in vocational teaching and learning; and
- A College-approved training and assessment qualification or assessor skills set.

Within the group of persons one or more must be **not** directly involved in the delivery and assessment of the assessment item/s being validated or moderated. The inclusion of a person not directly involved ensures professional distance and integrity.

Industry experts may be involved in validation and moderation sessions.

Trainers and assessors can be involved in validation and moderation activities, as long as they are not directly involved in deciding the final outcomes of the session for their own assessments.

Responsibility for Validation and Moderation

The **Directors of: VET Health, Aesthetics and Fitness** are responsible for:

- Ensuring implementation of this policy and its associated procedures and guidelines are being carried out within the each pillar to.
- Ensuring each qualification and its Units of Competency are validated at least once every 5 years, with at least 50% validated within the first 3 years of each 5 year cycle.
- Ensure the practices are undertaken by “appropriate groups of trainers/assessors and relevant staff”, and are detailed within the [Validation and Moderation Procedure VET](#).
- Authorising final decisions on the outcomes of validation or moderation processes.

The College Council is responsible for ensuring this policy and associated procedures or guidelines are consistent with sectoral norms and requirements, and for approval of any major amendments to this policy.

The VET Advisory Board is responsible for ensuring and overseeing the development of procedures or guidelines consistent with this policy.

The College’s staff are responsible for obtaining the appropriate forms from the website, and for filling them out correctly, and collecting, organising and applying the appropriate documentary evidence as outlined in the policy, procedure and associated resources.

Related Procedures:

Validation and Moderation Procedure VET - details who participates in processes by referencing position and/or titles, and outlines what occurs throughout the validation and moderation processes conducted by the College.

Definitions:

Assessment Strategies – includes the Delivery and Assessment Strategy (DAS), course structures, delivery methods.

Validation - is the quality review of the delivery and assessment process. Validation involves checking that the tool produces valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence to enable reasonable judgements to be made as to whether the requirements of the training package or VET accredited courses are met. It includes reviewing a statistically valid sample of the assessments and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes and acting upon such recommendations.

Moderation - is the process of ensuring assessment judgements are in alignment with the *Rules of Evidence* and the Standards. It is a process that ensures the same standards are applied to all assessment results within the same Unit(s) of Competency across all cohorts. It is an active process in the sense that adjustments to assessor judgements are made to overcome differences in the difficulty of the tool and/or the severity of judgements.

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.

Tools – includes all resources used in the delivery and assessment of the training package or accredited course, such as:

- **Training Tools** - learning materials, workbooks, presentations, recommended texts.

- **Assessment Tools** - exams, assignments and practical examinations including marking guides with full assessment criteria.
- **Student** – 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.

Further Information:

Related Policies:	Assessment Policy – VET Quality and Compliance Policy
Benchmarking:	RMIT, AIM, La Trobe University, and Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE.
Supporting Research and Analysis:	TVET Australia, the National Quality Council, Implementation Guide: Validation and Moderation 2009. Training.gov.au/TrainingComponentFiles/TAE10/TAEASS403A nssc.natese.gov.au/Assessor_Guide_-_Validation_and_Moderation https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/TAE40110 RMIT - http://rmit.com.au/browse;ID=onpk51q9afj AIM, La Trobe University, Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE. Launch of review of standards NSSC Standards Policy Framework
Related Documents:	Validation and Moderation Resources Kit (on the Source) Academic Governance Framework Professional Development Portfolio Validation Schedule VET Validation Strategies Checklist
Related Legislation:	Comlaw - Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 Comlaw - Standards For Vet Regulators 2011 ASQA - Standards For Continuing Registration (SNR) Comparison Table

National Quality Council - Code Of Professional Practice For Validation
& Moderation

Guidelines: Validation and Moderation Guidelines VET

Policy Author:	Quality and Compliance Project Officer
Policy Owner:	Directors of VET – Health, Aesthetics Education and Fitness
Contact:	Natalie Daniel (Health) natalie.daniel@endeavour.edu.au Heddy Macauley (Aesthetics Education) heddy.macauley@cnb.edu.au Graham Richardson (Fitness) graham.richardson@fiafitnation.edu.au
Recommending Body:	VET Advisory Board Recommended date: 12 September 2014
Approval Body:	College Council Approval date: 12 November 2014
Policy Status:	New
Responsibilities for Implementation:	VET Advisory Board National Compliance Manager Directors of VET – Health, Aesthetics Education and Fitness All VET Trainers
Key Stakeholders:	Directors of VET – Health, Aesthetics Education and Fitness VET Advisory Board National Compliance Manager All VET Trainers All College staff