Assessment Policy & Procedure

Purpose and Legislative Background:

Yarra College Australia (YCA) is committed to delivering high-quality, transparent, and accountable training and assessment practices that meet national standards, industry expectations, and the needs of our diverse student cohort.

Our approach is grounded in the Standards for RTOs 2025, Part 1, Division 2 (Standards 1.3 – 1.5), which require RTOs to implement an assessment system that:

- Ensures compliance with the assessment requirements of nationally endorsed Training Packages and VET Accredited Courses,
- Produces consistent and valid judgements of competency, and
- Provides clear, equitable, and accessible processes for learners to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

YCA recognises assessment as not just a compliance requirement, but as a critical educational process that validates student learning, supports workforce readiness, and upholds the integrity of the vocational education sector.

Scope:

This policy applies to:

- All students enrolled at YCA.
- All training and assessment staff (including contractors).
- All qualifications and units of competency on YCA's scope of registration.

Definitions:

Terms	Explanations
Assessment	Assessment is the process of collecting and evaluating evidence to determine if a student has achieved competency standards from a Training Package or Accredited Course. It measures both knowledge and practical application in real or simulated workplace settings. At YCA, this may include written tasks, projects, demonstrations, oral questioning, or third-party reports.
Assessment System	An assessment system is the documented framework of policies, procedures, and tools that ensures assessment outcomes are valid, reliable, fair, and consistent. It provides clear guidance to assessors and supports compliance with the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence.
Competency	Competency is the demonstrated ability to consistently apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the standard required in the workplace. It includes performing tasks, solving problems, and transferring skills across different situations
RPL	RPL is a formal assessment process that recognises an individual's existing skills, knowledge, and experience gained through work, training, or life activities. It allows students to demonstrate competency without repeating learning they have already achieved. Evidence is assessed against the requirements of the training product to determine whether credit can be granted.
	Formal Learning: Formal learning occurs through structured programs of study that lead to nationally or internationally recognised qualifications, such as certificates, diplomas, or university degrees. It is delivered by accredited institutions and follows a curriculum with measurable outcomes.
	Non-Formal Learning: Non-formal learning takes place through structured programs that do not result in a formal qualification. Examples include workplace training, professional development workshops, and in-house courses. While not accredited, these activities still provide valuable skills and knowledge relevant to the workplace.
	Informal Learning: Informal learning happens through day-to-day experiences, such as work tasks, hobbies, volunteering, or community involvement. It is unstructured and does not follow a formal curriculum but can contribute significantly to an individual's competency.
Reassessment	Reassessment provides students initially deemed Not Yet Competent (NYC) with further opportunities to demonstrate competence. It may involve resubmission, additional practice, or alternative tasks, while ensuring standards are maintained.
Validation	Validation is the formal review of assessment tools, processes, and judgements to ensure they are accurate, consistent, and compliant with regulatory standards. Outcomes feed into YCA's continuous improvement system to maintain quality and relevance.

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Assessment Policy & Procedure

Policy:

YCA ensures that:

- All assessments are competency-based.
- Students are assessed against nationally endorsed Training Packages or accredited courses.
- Reasonable adjustment is available to support access and equity.
- Feedback is timely, constructive, and supportive.
- Records of all assessment outcomes are securely maintained in accordance with compliance requirements.

Principles of Assessment

Principles:	Descriptions:
Fairness	Assessment processes must be equitable and transparent, ensuring that students are fully informed about requirements before assessment. Where necessary, reasonable adjustments are made to support students with special needs without compromising the integrity of the outcome. Students are also given opportunities to challenge decisions or appeal results if they believe the process was unfair.
Flexibility	Assessments are designed to accommodate diverse learning styles, pathways, and experiences, including classroom delivery, workplace application, and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). This principle ensures students can demonstrate competency using evidence from a variety of contexts. Flexibility also supports continuous engagement and reduces unnecessary barriers to achieving qualifications
Validity	Validity ensures that assessment tasks directly measure the required skills, knowledge, and performance standards outlined in the Training Package or Accredited Course. Evidence collected must relate specifically to the competencies being assessed and accurately reflect workplace expectations. This guarantees that successful students are genuinely job-ready.
Reliability	Reliability ensures that assessment outcomes are consistent and repeatable across different assessors, contexts, and times. It requires clear assessment tools, marking guides, and validation processes so that different assessors make comparable judgments. This principle safeguards the integrity and credibility of qualifications issued by YCA.

The foundation rules that support the policy at Yarra College:

Principles:	Descriptions:

1. Principles of Competency-Based Assessment

- At Yarra College, assessment is standards-based, not comparative.
- A student is deemed either Competent (C) – has demonstrated all requirements, or Not Yet Competent (NYC) – further learning and reassessment required.
- The process encourages active student involvement, promoting practical skill development and reflective learning.
- Outcomes are determined by evidence of ability to perform in accordance with the relevant training package and workplace standards.

2. Modes of Assessment

Assessment may occur through a mix of delivery contexts, designed to reflect real workplace demands:

- On-the-job performance (direct observation in the workplace)
- Integrated activities within training sessions
- Off-the-job tasks (role plays, simulations)
- Assignments and project submissions
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), where previous experience or qualifications are mapped to competency standards.

3. Evidence Collection Methods

To ensure valid and sufficient evidence, Yarra College may use:

- Demonstrations and simulations
- Written tasks (assignments, tests, reports)
- Oral questioning and presentations
- Role plays and group activities
- Portfolios of work and supporting documentation
- Workplace observations and third-party reports (e.g. supervisors, employers)
- Projects and case studies

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4. Levels of Assessment

Yarra College applies a staged approach to assessment to support student development:

1. Diagnostic Assessment (Pre-Training Check): Used at commencement to determine existing knowledge and potential learning gaps.
2. Formative Assessment (Progressive): Conducted throughout training; provides feedback, highlights areas for improvement, and supports learning.
3. Summative Assessment (Final Check): Conducted at the conclusion of training; confirms whether the student has met all requirements for competency.

5. Assessment Implementation

- All assessments are planned, consistent, and timely in line with training package requirements.
- Students are clearly informed of assessment requirements and due dates.
- Reasonable adjustments are applied where appropriate to support individual student needs, without compromising competency standards.
- Students receive constructive feedback after each assessment, including next steps or opportunities for reassessment.

Rules of Evidence:

Rules:	Descriptions:
Validity	The evidence presented by students must directly relate to the specific skills, knowledge, and performance requirements of the unit of competency. Assessors must be assured that the evidence aligns with the standards outlined in the Training Package or Accredited Course. This ensures that the assessment is genuinely measuring the intended outcomes and not unrelated skills.
Sufficiency	There must be enough evidence to demonstrate competency across the full breadth of requirements. A single piece of evidence is rarely sufficient on its own; instead, a collection of evidence types (e.g., observations, projects, third-party reports) should be used. This allows the assessor to make a well-informed and defensible judgement about the student's competency.
Authenticity	Assessors must be confident that the evidence submitted is the student's own work and not copied, falsified, or completed by someone else. Processes such as questioning, declaration forms, and plagiarism detection may be used to verify authenticity. This principle protects the integrity of the qualification and ensures that only genuine achievement is recognised.
Currency	The evidence must demonstrate that the student's skills and knowledge are up to date and relevant to current industry practices. Outdated evidence, even if once valid, may not meet the current competency requirements. Currency ensures that graduates are capable of performing to industry expectations at the time of assessment.

Assessment Procedure:

Before Assessment

- Trainers issue students with Assessment Briefs including due dates, instructions, and competency requirements.
- Students complete an Assessment Cover Sheet with declaration of authenticity.
- Trainers ensure students understand expectations, conditions, and marking criteria.
- Special needs or reasonable adjustments are identified through the Student Suitability Advice Form (Appendix C of Enrolment Policy).

Conducting Assessment

- Trainers use only YCA-approved assessment tools.
- Assessments may include: projects, assignments, demonstrations, written/oral tests, portfolios, workplace tasks, third-party reports.
- Practical assessments are conducted in real or simulated workplace conditions.
- Trainers must check student ID for authenticity.

Marking & Recording

- Assessors mark using the approved Marking Guide/Benchmark Answers.
- Outcomes are recorded as:
  - Competent (C) – all requirements met.
  - Not Yet Competent (NYC) – requirements not fully met.
- Students receive feedback within 10 working days.
- Results are uploaded into the Student Management System (SMS) within 10 working days.

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Resubmission & Reassessment

- All assessments must include a signed **Assessment Cover Sheet by student.**
- Assessments must be submitted by the due date, as outlined in the timetable.
- Students are permitted two reassessment attempts for any assessment task at no additional cost.
- After three (3) unsuccessful attempts, students may request an additional attempt, subject to the following:
- A fee will apply for the additional reassessment attempt.
- At the discretion of the Training Manager, this fee may be waived in cases where compassionate, compelling, or other reasonable circumstances exist.
- If competency is not achieved after all reassessment opportunities, the student may be required to re-enrol in the unit, with associated course fees.
- **Late submissions:**
  - Students may request an extension prior to the due date.
  - Where no extension is granted, students must apply for reassessment or re-enrolment, with fees applicable in line with the Fees and Refunds Policy.

Appeals

- **Right to Appeal:** Students have the right to appeal any assessment decision if they believe the outcome is unfair, incorrect, or inconsistent with the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence.
- **Timeframe:** An appeal must be lodged in writing **within 20 working days** of the student receiving their assessment outcome.
- **Process:**
  - Appeals are first reviewed by the original assessor together with the Training Manager to ensure the decision is valid, fair, and compliant with YCA's assessment system.
  - If the student is not satisfied, the matter will be escalated in accordance with Yarra College's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.
- An independent assessor may be appointed where required to ensure impartiality.
- **Student Support:** Students are entitled to support throughout the appeal process and will not be disadvantaged for lodging an appeal.
- **Recordkeeping:** All appeals, decisions, and outcomes are documented in the Student Management System (SMS) and retained in accordance with YCA's Records Management Policy.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) & Credit Transfer

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):

- Students may apply for RPL at the point of enrolment or at any time during their course of study.
- RPL involves the assessment of skills and knowledge gained through formal, non-formal, or informal learning to determine competency against the relevant unit(s) of competency.
- Applications must be supported by appropriate documentary evidence (e.g., employment records, portfolios, references, or prior study evidence).

Credit Transfer (CT):

- Credit Transfer is granted when a student provides certified copies of transcripts or Statements of Attainment issued by another RTO that clearly show successful completion of equivalent unit(s) of competency.
- Credit Transfer is not discretionary; where valid evidence is provided, YCA must award the credit in line with AQF and training package requirements.

Process and Policy Reference:

- All RPL and Credit Transfer applications are processed under **YCA's RPL Policy & Credit Transfer Policy and Procedure**.
- Outcomes are formally recorded in the Student Management System (SMS), and students are notified in writing.
- Successful RPL or Credit Transfer may reduce course duration, and where applicable, a revised **Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)** is issued via PRISMS.

Special Considerations and Reasonable Adjustments:

Eligibility for Special Consideration:

Students who experience illness, hardship, trauma, disability, or other exceptional circumstances may apply for adjustments to their assessment conditions. Situations may include, but are not limited to:

- Serious illness, injury, or psychological condition (supported by medical certificate or professional report).
- Bereavement of a close family member.
- Hardship or trauma (e.g., victim of crime, sudden loss of employment).
- Disability or learning difficulty requiring ongoing adjustments.

Types of Adjustments Available:

Approved applications may result in one or more of the following:

- Extension of assessment submission dates (not exceeding six months).

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- Deferred assessment.
- Alternative assessment arrangements (e.g., oral instead of written, extended time, use of assistive technology).
- Reassessment opportunity.
- Withdrawal or deferment of study without penalty, if appropriate.

Maintaining Assessment Integrity:

- All adjustments must comply with the principles of assessment and rules of evidence outlined in the Standards for RTOs 2025.
- Adjustments cannot compromise the integrity of competency requirements or give an unfair advantage/disadvantage to any student.

Application Process:

- Students must apply in writing to the Training Manager using the approved YCA *Special Consideration Request Form*.
- Supporting evidence (e.g., medical certificate, police report, statutory declaration) must be provided with the application.
- The Training Manager will review applications on a case-by-case basis, document the decision, and communicate outcomes in writing within 10 working days.

Records Management:

- All applications, supporting evidence, and outcomes are recorded in the Student Management System (SMS) and retained in accordance with YCA's Records Management Policy.

Assessment Resources

Assessment resources are designed to ensure fairness, consistency, and compliance.

- Resources are developed internally in consultation with industry experts, or sourced from recognised VET publishers.
- An assessment tool must include:
    1. Student instructions (assessment tasks and requirements).
    2. Assessor instructions.
    3. Assessment instruments (questions, projects, checklists).
    4. Pre-assessment briefing materials.
    5. Marking guides/checklists.
    6. Assessment outcome summary.
- Assessment tools serve as both the instrument for decision-making and the evidence of process, and are retained for at least two years.

Validation of Assessment

- Yarra College validates its assessment tools, processes, and outcomes as per SRTO 2025 Standard 1.5.
- Validation is scheduled across the scope of registration and involves industry input.
- Outcomes of validation feed directly into the continuous improvement system.

Assessment Marking & Feedback

- Assessments are **not graded**; outcomes are Competent (C) or Not Yet Competent (NYC).
- Assessors mark in order of submission and provide **constructive written and/or verbal feedback**.
- Students receive results within **two weeks** of submission, along with guidance for reassessment if applicable.

Assessment Decisions & Outcomes

- **Competent (C):** The student has demonstrated all required skills and knowledge to workplace standard for the full unit/module.
- **Not Yet Competent (NYC):** The student has not yet demonstrated the required standard. Feedback and additional support are provided before reassessment.
- Reassessment opportunities are offered in line with the Assessment Procedure.

Assessor Code of Conduct

Yarra College assessors commit to the following principles:

- Treat all students with equity and sensitivity.
- Manage and declare any conflicts of interest.
- Conduct assessments free from harassment or discrimination.
- Apply the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence consistently.
- Provide students with clear instructions, fair decisions, and access to appeal processes.
- Maintain confidentiality of results and release them only with student consent.
- Seek continuous professional development and contribute to peer validation and improvement activities.

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Academic Integrity – Plagiarism, Cheating & Collusion

- Yarra College maintains **zero tolerance** for academic misconduct in assessment.
- Students must:
    - Submit only their own work.
    - Not assist or accept assistance from others in individual assessments.
    - Not resubmit the same work already assessed elsewhere.
- Misconduct is investigated case by case, and outcomes may include:
    - Resubmission of new work.
    - NYC result for the assessment task.
    - Formal warning.
    - Suspension or expulsion in severe cases.

All incidents are documented in student records, and serious cases are escalated to the CEO.

Responsibilities

Training Manager/Coordinator

- Ensure assessment practices comply with training package and SRTO 2025 requirements.
- Approve appointment of qualified assessors.
- Monitor assessment processes for fairness, equity, and transparency.
- Oversee validation activities and implement improvements.
- Ensure students are provided with clear information, feedback, and access to appeals.

Assessors

- Plan and conduct assessments using approved tools.
- Apply the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence.
- Ensure safety, fairness, and consistency throughout the process.
- Provide timely feedback and submit assessment records promptly.
- Abide by the Assessor Code of Conduct.

Appeals

- Students have the right to appeal assessment decisions.
- Appeals are managed under the Complaints & Appeals Policy.

Records Management

- Assessment evidence (e.g., completed tasks, cover sheets) is retained for two years.
- Assessment outcomes are securely recorded in the Student Management System (SMS) and retained for 30 years in accordance with regulatory requirements.

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