

FACT SHEET

Conducting validation

Validation is a quality review process that confirms your RTO's assessment system can consistently produce valid assessment judgements.

A valid assessment judgement is one that confirms a learner holds all of the knowledge and skills described in a training product.

Validation activities are generally conducted after assessment is complete—so that an RTO can consider the validity of both **assessment practices** and **judgements**.

Validation involves checking that your assessment tools have produced valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic evidence—evidence that allows your RTO to make reasonable judgements about whether training product requirements have been met.

The validation process involves reviewing a statistically valid sample of the assessments and making recommendations for future improvements to the assessment tool, process and/or outcomes if applicable.

The validation process also includes acting upon any recommendations for future improvement.

As part of validation, your RTO must have a documented plan which describes:

- who will lead and participate in the validation activities
- which training products will be the focus of the validation
- when assessment validation will occur, and
- how the outcomes of those activities will be documented and acted upon.

How is **validation** different from **moderation**?

Moderation is a quality control process aimed at bringing assessment judgements into alignment.

Moderation is generally **conducted before the finalisation of student results** as it ensures the same decisions are applied to all assessment results within the same unit of competency.

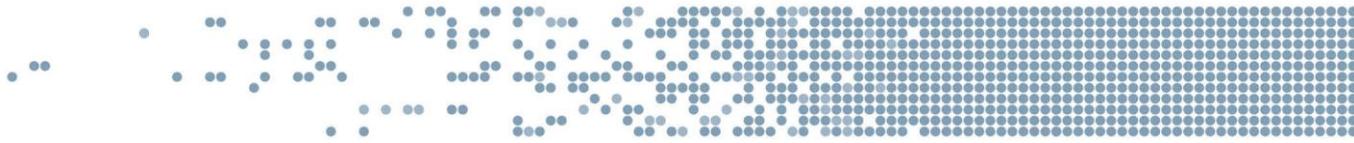
The requirement in the Standards to undertake validation of assessment judgements does not affect your RTO's ability to undertake moderation activities, or any other process aimed at increasing the quality of assessment.

Who conducts validation?

Validation can be undertaken by one person or by a team of people. Your RTO must ensure the review process is completed by people who collectively hold:

- vocational competencies and current industry skills relevant to the assessment being validated
- current knowledge and skills in vocational teaching and learning, and
- the *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* (or its successor) or the *TAESS00001 Assessor Skills Set* (or its successor).

Validators can be employees of your RTO, or you can seek external validators.



For example, you can seek participation in your validation processes from:

- employers and employer associations
- other industry bodies
- trainers and assessors, or
- consultants.

You could also work with other RTOs—from the same or different industry areas—and collaboratively validate each other's assessment practices and judgements.

The trainer and assessor who delivered/assessed the training product being validated:

- **can** participate in the validation process as part of a team
- **cannot** conduct the validation on his/her own
- **cannot** determine the validation outcome for any assessment judgements they made, and
- **cannot** be the lead validator in the assessment team.

Validators and 'industry relevance' requirements

Validation helps ensure that your RTO's training and assessment practices are relevant to the needs of industry.

People who have current skills, knowledge and experience in the vocational area can provide input on:

- the industry relevance of the context and conditions of the assessment
- the industry relevance of the resources used during assessment
- the tasks the learner completed, and
- the judgements made by the assessor.

People who are **vocationally competent** will either:

- hold competency in the training product being validated, or
- be able to demonstrate they have skills and knowledge equivalent to the requirements of the training product.

Validators and 'vocational teaching and learning' requirements

The validator, or someone within the validation team, must hold either:

- the *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* (or its successor), or
- the *TAESS0001 Assessor Skill Set* (or its successor).

A person demonstrating 'equivalence of competency' is not sufficient to meet this requirement.

Your validation process must:

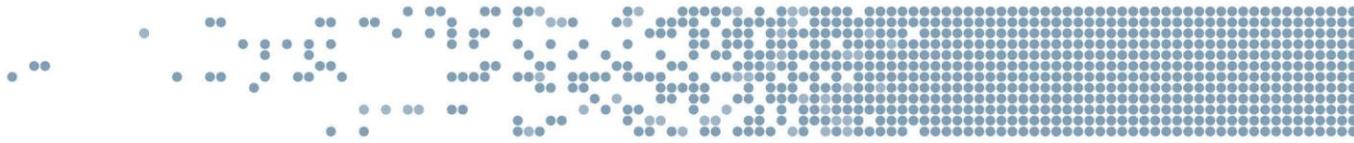
- reflect current vocational training practices, and
- use contemporary knowledge of the vocational education and training environment.

Scheduling validation

Your RTO will need to develop a schedule to validate each training product (AQF qualification, skill set, unit of competency, accredited short course and module) on its scope of registration.

If your RTO has a qualification on its scope of registration, you must validate that qualification. If your RTO has an explicit unit of competency on its scope of registration, you must validate that explicit unit.

A validation schedule is a **five year plan**; each training product must be reviewed at least once in that five-year period. At least 50 per cent of the training products must be validated in the first three years of the schedule. Your RTO might choose to validate its training products more often, for example, if risk



indicators demonstrate that more frequent validation is required. Indicators of risk might include:

- the use of new assessment tools
- delivery of training products where safety is a concern
- the level and experience of the assessor, or
- changes in technology, workplace processes, legislation, and licensing requirements.

ASQA may also identify certain training products that need more attention. When developing your validation schedule, consider areas ASQA has identified as 'high-risk'. These may require more frequent validation.

Your validation schedule must reflect your current scope of registration. Adjust the validation schedule when adding a new training product. When making adjustments, ensure your schedule continues to meet the timeframe and completion requirements discussed above.

Statistically valid sampling

A **statistically valid sample** is one that is:

- large enough that the validation outcomes of the sample can be applied to the entire set of judgements, and
- taken randomly from the set of assessment judgements being considered.

If you are validating a qualification, validate the assessment practices and judgements from a sample of the units of competency within that qualification. At least two units of competency should be sampled when validating a qualification. You may expand the number of units to validate at any time during the validation process, particularly when validation outcomes indicate that assessment judgments are not valid.

Calculating sample size

You must validate enough assessments to ensure that the results of your validation are accurate, and are representative of the total completed assessments for the training product.

To determine appropriate sample sizes, use ASQA's **validation sample size calculator**.

Using the ASQA sample size calculator

The calculator will ask you to input three figures:

1. the number of assessment judgements
2. your estimated error level, and
3. your confidence level.

Both error level and confidence level have been set to default values.

1. Number of assessment judgements

This is the total number of assessment judgements made in the training product you are validating within a set period of time.

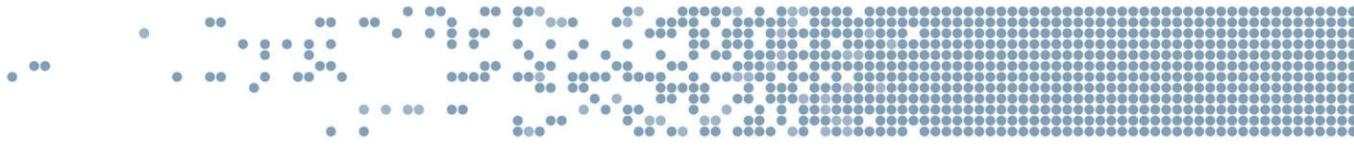
Determine the period of time to be considered based on your training and assessment strategies and timetabling. Consider assessment judgements made over a period of at least six months; this aligns with the retention requirements described in ASQA's *General Direction—Retention requirements for completed student assessment items*.

For example, if your RTO has assessed 150 learners against the requirements of a unit of competency in the last six months, you would enter '150' as the **number of assessment judgements**.

2. Error level

The error level relates to the **assessment outcome results**. In sampling terms, the error level can also be referred to as the 'margin of error'.

To determine an appropriate sample size, you need to consider how likely it is that the sample assessment outcomes will be a good representation of the total assessment outcomes.



When most assessment judgement outcomes are the same (for example, competent after the first assessment attempt), it is more likely that the sampled assessments will accurately represent all assessments. The error level, or risk that the validation sample size will not represent the total assessments, is not high. The recommended/default error level for this scenario is 15%.

However, if your assessment outcomes are varied—for example a mix of competent, competent after multiple attempts, and not competent assessment outcomes—there is a greater chance that the sampled assessments will not reflect the total assessments. To decrease this risk, **decrease the error level**. Note that when you lower the error level, the sample size will increase. Lowering the error level to any variant between 10 per cent and 15 per cent will allow for a good representation of the total assessment outcome results.

3. Confidence level

The confidence level relates to the **assessment judgements**.

The **confidence level** is how sure you need to be that the sample assessment judgements will produce an accurate validation outcome.

When there are risks that the validation outcome of a sample of assessments will not be reflective of the total assessments, you need to increase the confidence level.

When there are similarities in the factors that influence the assessment judgements, it can be assumed that validation of a smaller sample of these assessments will still produce an outcome which is representative of all assessment judgements. This can include, for example, when all assessment judgements have been made by one assessor or have been made by a number of assessors whose work has previously been validated.

If you perceive there is a higher risk that the validation outcome will not be reflective of all assessment

judgements, for example when a newly-qualified assessor has made the judgements, you should increase the confidence level. Increasing the confidence level increases your chance that the sample will be statistically valid.

In sampling, the generally accepted confidence level is 95%. If you want to increase the confidence level, and obtain a larger sample size, any variation between 95% and 99% is appropriate.

Random selection

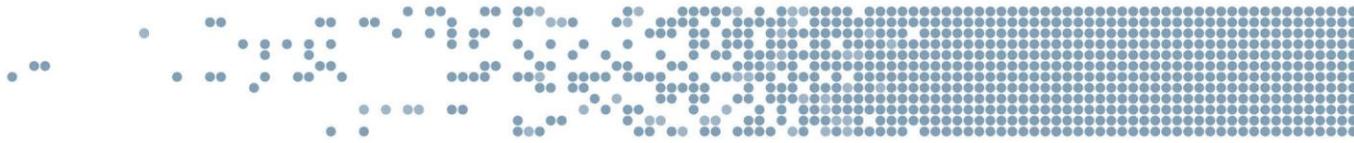
Samples of judged candidate evidence may be randomly selected using a number of different mechanisms, for example, using an alphabetical list.

Random selection—alphabetical list

Produce an alphabetical listing, sorted by surname, of all of the learners who submitted work within the training product being validated. From this list, highlight the fifth surname and then every third name thereafter. Go back to the beginning of the list if necessary to identify a sufficient sample size.

Those highlighted then become the randomly selected learners whose work is submitted for validation.

In most instances, randomly selecting your sample will ensure adequate coverage of varying levels of learner performance. You may also supplement the random selection by adding additional completed assessments (for example, in order to include both competent and not competent assessments, or to include multiple assessors' decisions, multiple delivery modes and locations) to ensure the validation process is representative of all assessment judgements.



Effective validation

Validation must consider only the assessment evidence retained within the sample. While validators may discuss the assessment process with the assessor who conducted the assessment, only the evidence collected, retained and recorded will support a validation decision.

Reviewing assessment practice

Validation determines if assessment tools have produced the intended evidence.

Validators must look at the evidence in the sample, and determine if it is valid, reliable, sufficient, current and authentic.

In reviewing assessment practice, validators should consider whether the assessment tools:

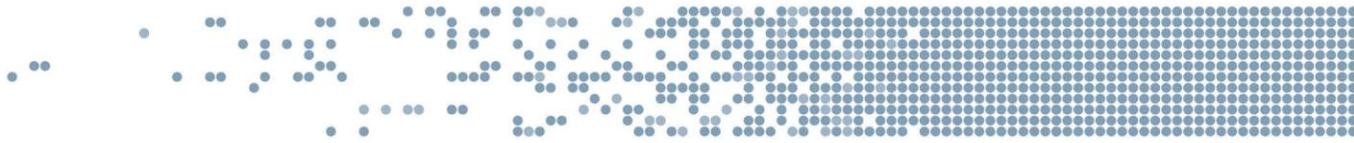
- comply with the assessment requirements of the relevant training product
- ensure the principles of fairness, flexibility, validity and reliability are adhered to
- have been designed to produce valid, sufficient, authentic and current evidence
- are appropriate to the contexts and conditions of assessment (this may include considering whether the assessment reflects real work-based contexts and meets industry requirements)
- are appropriate in terms of the level of difficulty of the tasks to be performed in relation to the skills and knowledge requirements of the unit
- provide sufficient instruction to clearly explain the tasks to be administered to the learner (if the assessment samples demonstrate the evidence provided by each learner is markedly different, this may indicate that instructions are not clear)
- give sufficient guidance as to the evidence to be gathered from the learner

- outline appropriate reasonable adjustments that could be made to the gathering of assessment evidence
- provide sufficient instructions for the assessor on collecting evidence, making a judgement, and recording the outcomes of the assessment (assessment samples should validate recording and reporting processes)
- are supported with evidence criteria to judge the quality of performance (if the assessment samples demonstrate the judgements made about each learner are markedly different, this may indicate that decision-making rules do not ensure consistency of judgement), and
- adhere to the requirements of the RTO's assessment system.

Reviewing assessment judgements

In reviewing the assessment judgements, validators should consider whether the learners' assessment evidence:

- complies with the assessment requirements of the relevant training product
- demonstrates that the assessment was conducted with fairness, flexibility, validity and reliability, and
- Is valid, sufficient, authentic and current.



Validation outcomes

The **validation outcomes** can identify recommendations for improvement to the assessment tool, assessment process or assessment outcome.

Sometimes the validation outcome can identify critical issues in the collection of valid evidence.

Should this occur, you may:

- increase the validation sample size to assist in identifying patterns of issue
- validate completed assessments from other units of competency to see if the issue is spread across the whole of the qualification, and
- look for patterns of error (for example, consider if it is one assessor making invalid judgements—this could indicate the assessor requires further training in competency-based assessment).

Your validation plan must clarify how you will document and act on validation outcomes. For example, an assessment validation checklist addressing the principles of assessment and rules of evidence may be utilised to document the validation outcomes. Outcomes of validation may be acted upon through your RTO's continuous improvement processes.

Your RTO must have a records management process to retain evidence of the validation. You should retain evidence of:

- the person/people leading and participating in the validation activities (including their qualifications, skills and knowledge)
- the sample pool
- the validation tools used
- all assessment samples considered, and
- the validation outcomes.

If the validation outcomes recommend improvements to the assessment tool, you should implement these recommendations across all training products, not only those included in the sample. If you make changes to the assessment tool, complete quality checks and review the revised tool prior to implementation.

More information

- Refer to the relevant *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* for more information—Clauses 1.9 – 1.11.
- Contact the ASQA Infoline on 1300 701 801 or enquiries@asqa.gov.au.