



ENERGY SECTOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY

ASSESSMENT & MODERATION POLICY

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for ESETA member organisations and providers to develop their own assessment management systems for course based learners and RPL candidates, and in doing so, that the assessment is conducted fairly, reliably and validly.

2. Definition of assessment

SAQA regards assessment as “a structured process of gathering evidence and making judgments about an individual’s performance in relation to registered national standards and qualifications.”

Various types of assessment exist. These are:

2.1. Informal

No formal record is made of this assessment, and it is used by trainers and assessors to determine the level of understanding learners may have about a topic.

2.2. Formal

This is a mark or result recorded for a specific purpose.

2.3. Formative

This is sometimes called continuous assessment, and is used to build a profile of the learner over time, and can be used to give feedback to a learner for remedial purposes. It may be linked to a summative result.

2.4. Summative

This refers to the final assessment at the end of a programme or course and is used to confirm that learners have met all the requirements of a standard or qualification. A summative assessment can be made up of a collection of formative assessments, and/or a final examination. Other assessment methods and assessment instruments may be used to arrive at a summative assessment.

3. Assessment principles

Assessors must be registered with the ESETA ETQA.

There are basic principles that apply to the assessment process. Providers have an obligation to ensure that learners and assessors are assessed using these principles.

These are that:

- Assessment will be clearly linked to specific outcomes
- Learners will be clearly informed on why, when, where and by who they will be assessed
- Assessment is integrated into the learning process to give feedback
- A variety of assessment methods will be used
- Assessment will be contextualised where possible
- Learners will take an active role in the assessment process
- Assessment will be sensitive to gender, race, language and cultural issues
- Moderation will form part of the assessment process

The following elements are critical to the assessment process.

Fairness

Assessment should be based on facts and not the background of the candidate.

Reliability and consistency

Assessments should be consistent in their outcomes. Moderators should arrive at the same results every time using the same assessment criteria.

Validity

Assessment must be based on the unit standard requirements.

Transparency

The assessment process and outcomes must be clear to the learner.

4. Elements of an assessment system

4.1. Purpose of an assessment system

The purpose of an assessment system is to gather information that is used to determine a learner's knowledge, skills and attitudes.

4.2. Control of assessment

Assessment must be controlled to ensure that the principle of validity is met.

4.3. Methods of assessment

The following methods should be used. This is not an exclusive list, and any combination of methods may be selected.

- Written assignments – examination, tests, projects, portfolio of evidence
- Observation – individual or group capabilities
- Peer and group assessment – feedback from individuals or teams
- Oral assessments – presentations, simulations, role play, questions
- Practical assessments – problems solving, demonstrations, projects

4.4. Assessment cycle

The timing of the assessment is determined by its purpose. Continuous or formative assessment is an ongoing activity, whereas formative assessment is more likely to be determined in advance when it will occur. Assessment should be thought of as a process of gathering information over a period of time, with a finite period in which the process ends.

5. Evidence of assessment

Evidence refers to a demonstrable output that indicates that a learner has those skills and knowledge required by a unit standard or a qualification. Evidence should be authentic, current and sufficient to demonstrate competence. Evidence must be relevant to the purpose of the assessment and qualification.

Three sources of evidence are usually gathered for assessment. These are:

- Direct evidence that is produced by the learner
- Indirect evidence gained through observation of the assessor or other sources
- Historical evidence is gained from past records, log books, certificates or performance records

6. Moderation of assessment

ESETA member organisations and providers must ensure that all assessments are moderated. The purpose of moderation is to ensure that assessments conducted by registered assessors meet the required outcomes laid out by the NQF standards and qualifications. Moderators who perform this task must be registered with the ESETA ETQA.

6.1. Duties of moderators

Moderators must ensure that:

- An appropriate sample is taken of assessments.

- The selection and design of assessment methods and instruments is appropriate to the unit standard and qualification that is being assessed.
- The assessment is conducted according to the criteria outlined in the assessment principles above.
- The process of arriving at results is in place and is moderated.
- Moderation reports are submitted to the ESETA ETQA after each moderation cycle.
- Assessment guides are developed.

6.2. Moderation cycle

The timing of the moderation process should match the assessment cycle. Moderation must take place within two weeks of an assessment.

6.3. Moderation sample

A sufficient sample should be selected of learners and providers to make the moderation process meaningful. The sample should be randomly selected, and the selection process should ensure that over a period of time, all providers have had their assessment results moderated. Providers should not be given advance notice of an inspection by a moderator.

7. Evaluation and Review of Assessment System

The ETQA manager should, on an annual basis, evaluate and review the effectiveness of the assessment system, taking into account:

- Assessment results submitted by providers
- Written reports from the assessors
- Written reports from the moderators
- Fairness, reliability, consistency, validity and transparency of assessments
- The methods of the assessment meet the principles outlines in point 4 of this Policy – Elements of an Assessment System

8. Registration of assessors and moderators

ESETA ETQA will register candidate assessors and moderators that comply with their requirements. These are as follows:

8.1. Assessors

- An assessor should have a recognised qualification in the unit standard(s) being assessed.
- An assessor should be a subject matter expert on the unit standard(s) that are being assessed demonstrated through work experience.

- An assessor should have at least a recognised qualification in the planning and conduct of assessment (ASSMT04) and preferably a qualification in the design and development of assessment (ASSMT01).

8.2. Moderators

- A moderator should have a recognised qualification in the discipline being assessed.
- Have subject matter expertise on the unit standard(s) that are being moderated demonstrated through work experience.
- A moderator should have a recognised qualification in the planning and conducting of assessment, its moderation and its design and development (ASSMT01, ASSMT02 and ASSMT04).

The application form and relevant supporting documentation must be submitted to the ESETA ETQA for evaluation. The candidate assessor or moderator will be informed as soon as possible, but no later than one month after their application has been received by the ESETA ETQA.

Registration is valid for a 3-year period, after which time the assessor or moderator must re-apply for registration.

Any assessor or moderator who does not conform to ESETA ETQA requirements in respect of the above criteria and responsibilities can be de-registered.

9. Certification of learners

The ESETA ETQA issues certificates of competency to learners who have sufficient NQF credits for a full qualification. This may be achieved through different pathways:

- Recognition of prior learning
- A registered learnership
- An accumulation of credits obtained through skills programs
- A full time recognised training course

Providers are obliged to inform the ESETA ETQA of any learner who meets these requirements.

10. Appeal against an adverse decision

Learners, assessors and moderators may appeal against any decision taken by the ESETA ETQA in respect of assessment results, moderation results, certification and registration, re-registration or de-registration.

11. Suspect or invalid assessment results

It may happen that assessment results of a learner, group of learners, or a provider give some indication that the assessment was irregular. Significantly higher or lower performance above the mean is often a signal. Where it is suspected that the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the principles of good assessment, the moderator or the ESETA ETQA HOD must investigate further. The following irregularities should be investigated.

- Assessment instruments not available for scrutiny by a moderator
- Inappropriate assessment instruments are used
- Inappropriate assessment specifications are used
- Insufficient evidence of the candidate learner's performance
- No record kept of candidate learner's performance history
- Inconsistent results between assessors at a learning site

11.1. Procedure to manage invalid assessment results

Where irregular assessment results have been reported to the ESETA ETQA, or have been discovered by the ESETA ETQA, the following procedure must be followed.

- A detailed written report from a moderator or the ETQA HOD must be submitted to the ESETA ETQA Accreditation committee within 2 weeks of the discovery of the irregular assessment results.
- The ESETA ETQA Accreditation committee must consider the severity of the issue and what remedial or punitive steps should be followed.
- ESETA ETQA Accreditation committee should advise candidate learners and providers in writing of their decision.
- A combination of the following remedial steps may be recommended:
 - Candidate learners are re-assessed by another assessor
 - The assessor be re-trained
 - The moderator be re-trained
- A combination of the following punitive steps may be recommended:
 - The assessment(s) is declared invalid
 - Candidate learners are required to repeat the course
 - The assessor is de-registered
 - The moderator is de-registered
 - The provider is de-accredited

12. Language

Language difficulties must not affect the ability of candidate learners to be fairly assessed. Learners should be assessed in the language with which they are most proficient, unless the qualification requires that a specific language must be used for the assessment.

13. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The ESETA policy on Recognition of Prior Learning applies. Any individual may request to be assessed in terms of the provider assessment practices without having to undergo any formal training. The candidate should be given the opportunity to be assessed in terms of unit standard or a full qualification. If successful, the provider should certify the candidate as competent in the unit standard or a full qualification. The ESETA ETQA will issue the competency certificate for a full qualification. Competency and credits in unit standards will be recorded on the ESETA ETQA database but no certificate will be issued.

The candidate has the right to appeal as well as to have the process moderated.