FACT SHEET 5

ASSESSMENT

SIMULATIONS

Introduction

In a competency-based assessment, it is ideal if evidence comes from the workplace. However, given that assessment will occur within HEIs either for all assessment events or prior to structure workplace learning, it is important for the validity of the assessment that simulated assessments are undertaken.

Simulations are structured assessment tasks to gather evidence that involve the learner completing various tasks or activities in an off-the-job situation, and that replicates the workplace.

Assessors may need to set up a simulated environment for the following reasons:

- The learner may not have access to a workplace.
- The available workplace may not apply the relevant skill or use the relevant equipment or process.
- Assessors visiting the workplace and conducting assessments may be disruptive or interfere with work requirements, e.g. the observer will obstruct workflow.
- It may not be appropriate for the learner to apply the skills and knowledge in the workplace due to potential risks, such as health and safety risks or equipment being damaged.
- It may not be appropriate for an assessor to observe the learner demonstrating the skills and knowledge due to ethical, privacy or confidentiality concerns, e.g. in age care facilities.

Simulations

For a learner to be assessed as competent, the assessor must ensure that the learner demonstrates their ability to perform the relevant tasks in a workplace situation, or a robustly simulated workplace environment. In addition, learners need to demonstrate that they can integrate their knowledge and skills and that they can make adaptations to the work activity due to any contingencies that may arise.

Simulations enable learners to demonstrate:

- That they can integrate their knowledge and skills.
- That they can make adaptations to the work activity due to any contingencies that may arise.
- That they can use generic skills, such as problem-solving, numeracy and literacy skills.
- Specific workplace practices, such as compliance with occupational health and safety procedures.

Simulations range from recreated workplace situations (for example, a virtual business centre or a flight simulator) to role plays based on workplace scenarios (for example budget spreadsheets for an imaginary company, or a conflict situation between a customer and a waiter, or rescue strategies in a maritime disaster).

Developing a simulation

To enable valid evidence to be collected, the simulation must resemble as much as possible what occurs in a real work environment. This includes replicating the resources, equipment, environment and any time and productivity pressures that exist in the actual workplace – for example, a simulated restaurant has a commercial kitchen and customers.

It is best if simulations:

- Involve a range of activities that reflect the real workplace environment.
- Allow for the performance of the required skills and knowledge.
- Allow for opportunities to use the range of required equipment.
- Allow for opportunities to deal with multiple tasks and prioritise competing tasks.
- Reflect timelines and deadlines.
- Demonstrate generic skills, such as written skills relevant to the work tasks.

When developing simulation tasks, it is important to consult with industry stakeholders to strengthen how the simulation replicates the workplace.

Supporting materials

The simulation task will be documented within an assessment tool (refer to 3-1-b-Fact Sheet 2) with clear instructions for the assessor (that address the steps involved in conducting the activity, how to conduct the activity, the materials required, a process for debriefing the learner), instructions for the learners, and a record form such as an observation checklist that outlines the required or expected performance.

If the simulation includes a role play and various characters, it may be useful to document each character's role on a small card for use by the participants.

Associated documents

- Fact Sheet 1: Assessment system
- Fact Sheet 2: Assessment tools
- Fact Sheet 3: Recognition of Prior Learning
- Fact Sheet 4: Internal moderation
- Fact Sheet 6: Meeting assessors' requirements
- Fact Sheet 7: Using third parties to collect assessment evidence
- Fact Sheet 8: Structured workplace learning and workplace assessment
- Assessment tool templates.

References

ASQA. 2015. *Users' Guide: Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*. Canberra. Australian Government.

Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. 2001. *Training Package assessment materials kit*: *Guide 1*. Canberra.