



Response to validation of draft TAE40115 assessment tools conducted by TAFE Queensland and Central Queensland University

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Background information

Background

On 19 October 2015, personnel from the two RTOs listed below validated each other's draft TAE40115 assessment tools:

- Central Queensland University (CQU) and
- TAFE Queensland (TQ).

CQU will use TAE40115 assessment tools developed by Blackwater Projects in its TAE40115 delivery. Therefore, Blackwater Projects sent to CQU, its draft TAE40115 assessment tools for use in these validations.

About this report

This report contains Blackwater Projects' responses to validation findings and recommendations.

About the validations

Each validation team comprised a mix of TAFE Queensland, CQU staff and external consultants representing a range of specialisations including:

- Training and Education (TAE)
- Language, literacy and Numeracy (LLN)
- RTO compliance (both internal compliance staff and external auditors).

The following draft Blackwater Projects assessment tools were validated:

- TAELLN411 assessment tool—version 3, draft 5
- TAE40115 Designing Learning ('DES') assessment tool—version 1, draft 1
- TAE40115 Delivering training ('DEL') assessment tool—version 1, draft 2
- TAE40115 RPL kit—version 1, draft 1.

Terms

Term	What it means in this document
we	Refers to Chemène Sinson plus others with whom she discussed validators' recommendations
PC	Performance criteria or criterion—from the unit of competence
PE	Performance evidence—from assessment requirements for the unit
KE	Knowledge evidence—from assessment requirements for the unit

TAELLN411 assessment tool validation

Unit covered

TAELLN411 Address adult language, literacy and numeracy skills

General response from Blackwater Projects

Thank you for such comprehensive, supportive and constructive comments. Validators raised some excellent points. We particularly appreciate the time validators took in the written report to make specific suggestions for how to address the concerns identified. We intend to action most of the suggestions (see specific comments below).

Responses to specific validator comments

	Validator comments/recommendations	Blackwater Projects response	Action plan
1	<p>Assessment 1 Short answer Marking key asks for evidence of three (3) in Q2 a) conflicts with question.</p> <p>Q 3 a) marking states 3 parts only a and b asked for.</p> <p>Replace 'places 'with sources in assessors instructions throughout for consistency.</p> <p>Q 4 Change to 'Describe best practice techniques you use or could use to evaluate the effectiveness of your own training and assessment practice'. Suggested response then requires amendment.</p> <p>Mapping requires some amendment after suggested changes. Unit of study guide not reviewed.</p>	<p>All excellent points that show a genuine interest in the tool and exceptional attention to detail. Thank you.</p>	<p>1. Action all validator recommendations. To do this we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rephrase Q1 to state: "Describe at least three (3) sources..." • Adjust marking guide for Q1 to reflect this change. • Rephrase Q2 to state: "a. Describe two (2) cultural or social..." and "b. Describe how to..." • Adjust marking guide for Q2 to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – reflect change to question – address error identified by validators (correct guide to show that 2 examples are required for part A) • Rephrase Q3 to: "a. Describe..." and "b. Research and describe..." • Adjust marking guide for Q3 to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reflect changes to wording of question – Update information provided about satisfactory response to reflect current VET websites and key stakeholders.

Blackwater Projects' response to TQ and CQU validation of TAE Assessment Tools

	Validator comments/recommendations	Blackwater Projects response	Action plan
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rephrase Q4 to as suggested by validators, but retain requirement to highlight that LLN support within training and assessment should be evaluated, not just training and assessment in general. Adjust marking guide for question 4 to reflect changes. <p>2. Review mapping document and update as needed to reflect above changes.</p>
2	Assessment scenarios are great, and should be developed into an AQF level 5 tool. It is felt that there are too many tasks and whilst detailed, is aimed at too high a level. The validation panel felt that the interpretation of the unit requirements, appears to not align fully with the workplace delivery aspect.	<p>Thank you for these comments, and for your suggestions below to ensure the assessment tool is pitched at AQF level 4, rather than 5. You raise some excellent points here.</p> <p>We were unsure what validators meant by "... the workplace delivery aspect".</p>	Undertake actions listed below to ensure the tool remains pitched at AQF level 4.
3	Task 1 - Spell out SOP in full, Spell participants manual with capitals	Great points! Thank you.	<p>3. Replace SOP with Standard Operating Procedure</p> <p>4. Replace participant manual with Participant Manual</p> <p>5. Review capitalisation used throughout all TAE documents to ensure Participant Manual is consistently written with capitalisation.</p>
4	Task 2 - Case study is a good and robust idea, however asking to produce to spiky profile is too much a task. This appears to be at a level 5 AQF. Suggest that a profile is supplied for the student from which to develop a learning strategy. Change stage three (3) to review Arthur's ACSF core skills levels to maintain continuity. Remove point two (2) and revise instructions. Revise the marking guide to reflect suggested changes.	<p>We accept that producing a spiky profile may be beyond requirements for this unit.</p> <p>PC 1.3 states: "Determine the LLN skills of the learner group from validated tools and other sources." To cover this PC, we feel that participants should attempt to determine the LLN skills held. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> we disagree with validators' suggestions to supply a student profile we loved the suggestion not given in the written report, but apparently given verbally by one validator (LLN expert) to offer a choice of profiles, then have 	<p>6. Revise Task 2 so that participants must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose the correct learner profile from three profiles that we will provide Justify the choice of profile.

	Validator comments/recommendations	Blackwater Projects response	Action plan
		participants choose the correct one and explain why it reflects Arthur's skills.	
5	Task 3 - Too large and imposing for AQF 4. Suggest two scenarios only, Arthur and Jake to spread the skill gaps. Include a statement that all scenarios are based on real vocational situations. Task 3 part 2 retain assessment.	<p>We agree with the findings that this task is too large, and agree that the number of scenarios should be reduced.</p> <p>We disagree with the recommendation to retain the Arthur and Jake scenarios, as both are too similar—white, middle-aged, white Anglo-Saxon males who have no post-secondary qualifications.</p> <p>Furthermore, we feel that Arthur's gaps are so extensive (at least four of the five core skills) that the task of identifying how to support and upskill Arthur is complex and beyond requirements of this unit.</p>	<p>7. Reduce the total number of scenarios from 7 to 5, as follows:</p> <p>Reduce the scenarios for support during training from 5 to 3—each scenario to explicitly focus on only one core skill gap so it is easier for participants to focus their attention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain the following instructional strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reading: Jake (no changes) – Oral communication: Alain and Rajesh (no changes) – Numeracy: Group training to develop a budget (change group profile to include mix of young and older participants) • Assessment scenarios will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Learning—Daniella (no changes) – Writing—Modify the current writing scenario (Scenario 2) or modify the Arthur scenario to focus on just assessment support strategies that address writing gaps. <p>We feel these scenarios will enable participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how to provide support for all five core skills in a range of group and 1:1 training and assessment situations • Cover PE requirements which state that participants must: select at least two instructional strategies and two assessment strategies (we have 3 instructional scenarios, so a slight over-assessment but one we feel we can justify to allow participants to show ability to support learners with needs in any of the five core skills.
6	Task 5 - Only two (2) scenarios are required stick with Arthur and Jake.	<p>Agree that the size of this task could be significantly reduced. Disagree with choice of Arthur as a support aid—too complicated.</p> <p>Excellent food for thought here. Thank you.</p>	<p>8. Modify Task 5 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delete part 1—which asks participants to identify whether or not they feel LLN specialist support is required • Retain only part 2 with no changes.

	Validator comments/recommendations	Blackwater Projects response	Action plan
7	<p>Task 6 - Could be changed to a self-review to cover off how the students have used different strategies and tools. Be mindful of over assessing.</p>	<p>Validator recommendations are ideal for experienced and practicing trainers/assessors who have addressed adult LLN skills in the past. However, we feel it poses challenges for participants who have not had these experiences to reflect upon.</p> <p>Therefore, we feel that this task must retain an option to complete a practical delivery task in which they deliver vocational training to a small group and address at least one LLN skill need in their delivery. PEs 4, 5 and 7 of the unit state that participants must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customise and use at least two learning resources... • select, use and review at least two instructional strategies... • select, use and review at least two assessment strategies... <p>We discussed the validators' findings with Ruth Walker of Independent Assessment Validation Services. Ruth is a former ASQA auditor and TAE industry specialist. She agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task 6—as presented to validators may be more onerous than needed, so agrees with QLD validators that we can streamline current requirements • Task 6 must retain the requirement that participants <u>use</u> instructional and assessment strategies • Ruth also noted the importance of a strong self-reflection to constitute 'review'. 	<p>9. Modify Task 6 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain Part 1—Background information questions • Retain Part 2—Modified resource used in the session • Modify Part 3—Evidence of delivery Instead of asking for observation checklist or video, ask for sign-off by someone who can verify that the participant completed this task with 'real vocational' learners, either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – in the workplace, or – as part of their TAE training. • Modify Part 4—Self-reflection Re-work the questions so that this task becomes more robust. Ask explicit questions that prompt the participant to consider the effectiveness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The instructional strategy/ies used to support the learners and build LLN skills – The assessment strategy/ies used to address LLN needs – The resource/s used to support LLN needs – Reflect on their general practice as a trainer/assessor and consider changes they will make to improve the LLN support they provide as part of their vocational training and assessment.

TAE40115 'DES' assessment tool validation

Units covered

TAEDES401 Design and develop learning programs

TAEDES402 Use training packages and accredited courses to meet client needs.

General response from Blackwater Projects

Thanks for your comments and queries about this assessment tool. This tool was not yet complete at the time of the validation, so we were unable to provide up-to-date mapping. We appreciate the queries posed by the validators.

Responses to specific validator comments

	Validator comments / recommendations	Blackwater Projects response	Action plan
1	TAEDES401 KE10 - is this on the template?	<p>KE 10 lists required knowledge evidence of: "relevant policies, legal requirements, codes of practice and national standards, including commonwealth and state or territory legislation, that may affect training and assessment in the VET sector"</p> <p>We assume that by 'template' validators mean the learning program plan template provided for optional use completing this assessment.</p> <p>We feel that KE10 is covered through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short answer questions 1, 3 and 7 • The learning program plan template and learning program competency map—participants are prompted to prepare a learning program plan that aligns to key policies, legal requirements, etc, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Covers all aspects of the unit/s (Standards for RTOs, legal) – Learning process is appropriate for target learners (Standards for RTOs, RTO policies and procedures, Code of Practice for Assessors) 	Action: No change.
2	element 1.1 ? Collaboration does 5C cover this? Are key stakeholders consulted?	<p>Element 1.1 states: "Clarify the purpose and type of learning program with key stakeholders"</p> <p>We feel that this element is covered through:</p>	Action: no change.

Blackwater Projects' response to TQ and CQU validation of TAE Assessment Tools

	Validator comments / recommendations	Blackwater Projects response	Action plan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (possible) DES Task 1 – If completed during training time, key stakeholders are peers• DES Task 1 – Question 5C: Agree with validators. 5C covers element 1.1• Short answer question 5 also covers this.	

TAE40115 'DEL' assessment tool validation

Units covered

TAEDEL401 Plan, organise and deliver group-based learning
 TAEDEL402 Plan, organise and facilitate learning in the workplace
 TAEDEL301 Provide work skill instruction
 BSBCMM401 Make a presentation.

General response from Blackwater Projects

Thanks for these comments. We think all comments make sense and will action all in some way. See details below.

Responses to specific validator comments

	Validator comments/recommendations	Blackwater Projects response	Action plan
1	Too much information up front for the learner to wade through before they get to the actual task. Eg: Useful assessment specific information commences on pages 8 & 9.	We agree! We ran some validation webinars for all drafts in August and validators of all tools were asked this question—can we streamline info in the introduction? Although feedback was mixed, the majority preferred to retain all information. They said that they liked having all information needed in one document.	Despite the majority of validators in August preferring to leave detailed information up front, we agree with TQ and CQU validators. So we've made an executive decision and will action the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move list of units covered in this assessment to the previous page (About this document section) 2. Delete the next 2 pages with competency map and information about how the tasks will be assessed 3. Keep the instructions for candidates 4. We'll apply changes listed above to the global assessment booklet template so that all tools in the series are presented in a consistent way.
2	Information provided in the assessment guide eg: 'How to Get Started' (page 29 - Task 1)	This is a Catch-22. If we make this change, some RTO clients will be happy and others will be unhappy, and vice versa.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To the Instructions for Use of the Assessment tools document, add the option for RTOs to move information about 'How to get Started' to be placed with the Task Instructions.

	Validator comments/recommendations	Blackwater Projects response	Action plan
	should be moved to page 19 (Task 1) and become assessment task instructions.	<p>When we wrote the first versions of the TAE40110 tools, assessment task instructions had two sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What to do (step by step instructions) • What to submit (as evidence of having completed the task) <p>Although we received a lot of positive feedback about the clarity of the instructions, we received even stronger feedback that the instructions were too detailed and that information in the What to Do section sometimes duplicated information in the What to Submit section.</p> <p>In 2013—in response to feedback—we moved to the current approach to have only a brief summary of the task in the instructions, followed by the list of items to submit. The more detailed information and instructions are in the Assessment Guide. This includes What to Do (under the heading, “How to get started with this task”).</p>	<p>We will make no changes to the assessment booklets. RTOs using the resources may adapt them by placing the ‘how to get started’ information with the task instructions, as recommended by the validators.</p>
3	Page 33 should be added to page 21 as assessment task instructions for task 3	Comments as above	No changes, for reasons explained above.
4	<p>Offer option of observation in lieu of videoing training sessions.</p> <p>Candidates need advice regarding video evidence up front not embedded in the session checklist. Eg add to page 8.</p>	<p>Excellent point. Original versions of the tool required a completed checklist (by TAE trainer or by workplace observer), not a video.</p> <p>In late 2012 two RTOs using the materials had this queried by an auditor who said that a workplace observer was not sufficient for this task. On their advice we changed to video evidence.</p> <p>We think the validator suggestions to have either video or the RTO’s TAE trainer/assessor observe live will address authenticity issues and offer better flexibility.</p>	<p>6. In both Tasks 2 and 3, change assessment requirement that states “video recording...” to: “Evidence of delivery. Choose one of the two options below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1—video • Option 2—completed observation checklist.” <p>7. Re Tasks 1 and 2: Will set up stand-alone group delivery observation checklist for TAE trainers/assessors to complete for all group sessions they observe (i.e. it may be used for Task 1 and for Task 2).</p> <p>8. Re Task 3: Will add observation checklist for 1:1 facilitation to be observed by TAE trainer where possible.</p>

Blackwater Projects' response to TQ and CQU validation of TAE Assessment Tools

	Validator comments/recommendations	Blackwater Projects response	Action plan
5	Page 14 Q.6 does not meet the requirements of the National Standards for Reporting (Quality Indicator and AVETMISS data).	Thanks. We didn't consider National Standards for Reporting when we wrote this question. It is unclear to us what should be covered (that isn't)	We don't know how to address this. Happy to take suggestions from the validators.
6	Suggest finding an alternative for 'List' in Q.4 & Q.10 - (not AQF IV level questions)	Good point. In both cases, the question read, "list and describe" so not only "list". Therefore AQF 4 is met, but validators make a good point—perhaps "list" is not needed.	9. Remove the term 'list' from questions 4 and 10.

TAE40115 RPL Kit validation

Units covered

All 8 core units in the proposed TAE40115 qualification (based on unit drafts that were current at the time of validation), plus a choice of elective units.

General response from Blackwater Projects

Thank you for your comments. All recommendations offer valid suggestions for improvement of this RPL kit, in particular to promote reliability.

Responses to specific validator comments

	Validator comments / recommendations	Blackwater Projects response	Action plan
Summary recommendations			
1	Benchmark answers for each set of questions for each unit.	We feel that TAE RPL assessors should have the vocational competence to be able to ascertain a candidate's competence without benchmark answers. The challenge of benchmark answers in RPL is that RPL is meant to be more flexible than training-and-assessment pathway assessments. We are concerned that information overload may result in this kit becoming too 'large' an unwieldy to use.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Instructions for Use and Marking Guide document not yet developed. We will develop and list benchmark answers or general guidelines for assessors in this document. We will consider what an appropriate balance between useful information and too much information is. We must allow flexibility in RPL assessment, so we are hesitant to be too prescriptive.
2	Professional conversation for key/all questions rather than completed portfolio of written answers - drives RPL to unit by unit rather than holistic plus cannot verify authenticity.	<p>The move to unit-to-unit was driven by feedback from many clients that they needed to be able to isolate individual units for RPL. The holistic approach used in the TAE40110 RPL kit had obvious advantages for students seeking RPL in multiple units, but many RTOs strongly expressed need to isolate units for RPL, hence the new approach. In the August validation conducted with a range of clients, validators selected the unit by unit option over the previous holistic format.</p> <p>Agree with recommendation to promote professional conversation as an easier way to determine knowledge evidence, in particular.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance opportunities for professional conversation in the RPL process by reverting to some aspects of the 'show and tell' approach used in the Blackwater Projects TAE40110 RPL kit. Consider how to maintain unit-by-unit structure, but make assessment more streamlined—e.g. perhaps revert to all knowledge evidence for a particular cluster of units in one place, so evidence is more streamlined. Or perhaps divide kit into RPL assessment by cluster. We will reflect on this.

	Validator comments / recommendations	Blackwater Projects response	Action plan
		Will consider how to make the tool more flexible to allow knowledge evidence to be gathered through a professional conversation where possible, or in writing.	<p>4. Update the <i>RPL Information</i> document to ensure consistency with any changes to Application Kit.</p> <p>5. Ensure that the <i>Instructions for Use and Marking Guide</i> (when developed) provides consistent information with other RPL documents.</p>
Detailed comments that appear earlier in validation report			
3	The Assessment instructions are quite wordy and repetitive, could be streamlined.	<p>Initial queries we had after reading these comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We didn't know if validators were referring to instructions in the <i>RPL Information</i> document, the <i>Application template</i>, or both. Within the <i>Application template</i>, instructions are repeated for each unit, to allow RTOs to separate individual units more easily. If there are other forms of repetition we are happy to hear of examples. We're trying to create a kit that is as streamlined as possible. <p>On 12 November 2015, we had a conversation with one of the validators, who clarified feedback as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repetition within the <i>RPL Application Kit</i> was acceptable, as RTOs may separate the kit into individual units. The comments about wordiness of instructions relate to the assessment booklets for the training and assessment pathway assessment tools, not the RPL kit. 	<p>No changes in the RPL kit documents in this regard, although we will edit the final draft to ensure as little repetition as possible.</p> <p>We have removed 2 pages from the introductory information in the assessment booklet. For details, see DEL Validation, Item 1 of this report.</p>
4	Was not provided the TAS however believe that the tool would work in with any TAS that has RPL available as an assessment strategy.	Thank you.	No change
5	All units / questions need benchmark answers to be checked/documentated to ensure all performance criteria have been met including observable behaviours and industry agreed	Question: could TAE assessors not be referred to the units themselves? We are trying to achieve an appropriate balance between sufficient information to ensure enough clarity vs information overload that may lead to a loss of clarity?	See comments for item 1 above

Blackwater Projects' response to TQ and CQU validation of TAE Assessment Tools

	Validator comments / recommendations	Blackwater Projects response	Action plan
	standards. eg. documented strategies for improvement.		
6	Difficult to ensure the PCs have been met without benchmark answers.	<p>Query: Do validators mean benchmark answers for assessors (we assume so) or for candidates?</p> <p>We feel validators make a fair point, but benchmark answers for PCs are difficult, as there are so many ways for candidates to demonstrate the PCs. RPL assessors should be able to read PCs and apply a flexible approach when reviewing evidence offered by the candidate.</p>	See comments for item 1 above
7	Difficult to evidence contingency skills without requirements for reflection and documented strategies for improvements, nor professional conversation.	We agree that professional conversation would enhance evidence of contingency management skills.	6. In <i>Instructions for Use and Marking Guide</i>, emphasise the need to assess dimensions of competence —particularly contingency management skills
8	Matrix not provided.	<p>True. The obvious alignment between assessment requirements and the units makes a matrix unnecessary, in our opinion.</p> <p>Validators did not recommend creation of a matrix, so we assume they feel the same.</p>	No changes in this regard.