



On-Job Qualifications
for Active Careers



SKILLS ACTIVE ASSESSORS
The heart of industry training

This information sheet will help you understand some of the specific needs an individual trainee may have, and how you can help them succeed in their assessment.

As an assessor, you need to be aware of any specific trainee needs that could cause barriers to successful learning and assessment, such as:

- literacy/numeracy concerns
- speaking English as a second language (ESOL)
- a physical disability, such as hearing, speaking or eyesight impairment.

You can check for such needs or concerns by building a positive relationship with every trainee, and with their manager or training coordinator, in the period leading up to assessment and through sensitive questioning in your pre-assessment meeting(s) with the trainee.



No trainee should be assessed until they feel ready, and until the assessment conditions are suitable for their specific needs. NZQA: 'Assessment will be fair – assessment methods will not disadvantage individuals or groups by hindering or limiting them in ways unrelated to the evidence sought.'

All trainees must be judged against the same standards and competency requirements, but this does not mean that they must all be assessed the same way. There are eight qualities (or protocols) around which you should conduct your assessments:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 SUFFICIENCY | 5 FAIRNESS |
| 2 VALIDITY | 6 CURRENCY |
| 3 CONSISTENCY | 7 REPEATABILITY |
| 4 AUTHENTICITY | 8 COMPETENCE |

The fifth point, fairness, requires that assessment methods and/or the assessor do not disadvantage any individual from providing sufficient, valid, consistent, authentic and current evidence to demonstrate competence against the qualification requirements.

The process of gathering evidence to be used to assess competence can vary and an assessor can safely make reasonable adjustments, while still retaining the rigour and consistency of their judgements. It is expected that assessors will use this flexibility for all trainees – not just those with disability or other specific requirements.

You can ask written questions orally if the trainee has reading or writing difficulties, providing you ‘capture’ the evidence of their knowledge by recording their answers electronically or writing them down yourself. If you are writing for the trainee, the trainee must sign/date to confirm their answers.

For someone with dyslexia or poor eyesight you might enlarge the assessment text or help them to read it.

These adjustments make understanding the tasks and responding appropriately less threatening, but they do not alter the thought processes the trainee has to go through to demonstrate knowledge.



Remember that written assessment tasks are not a test of a trainee’s reading and writing skills but of their ability to understand or perform a specific job-related skill or area of knowledge. A trainee may know the answer but may have difficulty reading the question or writing the answer. This is where varying the method of assessment (for example, oral questioning) can be used.

SPECIFIC TRAINEE NEEDS

LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND NUMERACY (LLN)

‘Workplace literacy’ means the language and numeracy skills a person needs to be able to do their job effectively and to fully engage in their workplace. Common workplace literacy skills include:

- Speaking and listening
- Working with numbers (numeracy)
- Reading and writing
- Comprehension and critical thinking
- Using technology.

In the roles carried out by the trainees you assess, specific literacy and numeracy skills required may include handling cash, giving instructions, reading maps, understanding manufacturers’ instructions, reading signs and memos, interpreting health and safety rules, ordering stock, analysing emergency plans and so on.

A low level of workplace literacy does not mean that a person is ‘slow’ or ‘dumb’ – it may be a result of, for example, an upbringing in a non-English speaking environment, interrupted schooling or a ‘hidden’ disability such as poor eyesight, poor hearing or dyslexia.



People with less effective literacy skills may:

- Be slow to understand written or verbal instructions
- Make more mistakes
- Avoid speaking up in meetings
- Avoid going to training sessions
- Be scared of taking on new tasks
- Be reluctant to offer ideas and suggestions
- Take more sick days, especially when faced with new challenges such as training and assessment.

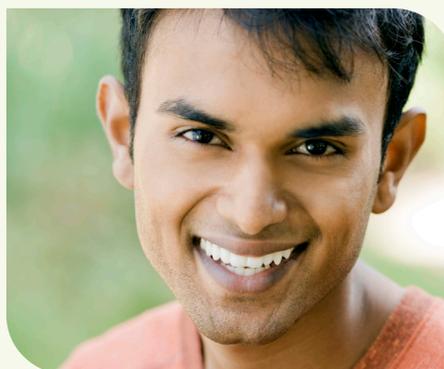


As a workplace assessor, you can help identify who may have difficulties with literacy and numeracy skills and discuss with their manager or training coordinator where to find the help they need to complete their qualification.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESOL)

In a multi-cultural country like New Zealand, workplaces may have staff undertaking qualifications who do not have English as their first language. Here are some tips for communicating with someone for whom English is a second language. These are also useful for anyone who you have recognised as having difficulties with workplace learning and assessment.

- Speak slowly (but not so that they feel you are talking to a child).
- Use simple language and speak clearly (at a normal volume).
- Don't make quick judgements about someone's understanding based only on their speaking ability. Everyone in the workforce has prior knowledge or experience they can build on.
- Don't use slang words and idioms, like 'dodgy', 'away with the fairies' etc unless you are sure the person understands them.
- Use gestures and facial expressions to illustrate what you are saying.
- Ask plenty of questions to check that you are being understood.
- Look for signs of concern or stress.
- Use visuals to support what you are saying (demonstrations, diagrams, charts etc).
- Give examples that relate to a situation that might be familiar to them and their own cultural perspective.
- Correct mistakes by restating or modelling the correct way.
- Write down words that they might not know, and demonstrate how to pronounce them.
- Be patient; try to imagine yourself in their country trying to learn and work.
- Be honest in your communication; say 'I don't understand' – and encourage them to do the same.



HEARING IMPAIRMENT

If you are unsure how to communicate well with a trainee who has hearing loss, ask them what works best for them. Here are some tips for communicating with staff who have hearing issues:

- Prepare information in advance so the trainee knows what you will want to discuss at pre-assessment meetings and during assessment.
- Ask what help they might need during assessment.
- Don't be embarrassed, uncomfortable or frustrated. Don't make the person feel as though they are a problem.
- A person with hearing loss needs to see your face during conversations. Don't stand in front of a window, for example, because the back-light shadows your face.
- Keep eye contact. Look for signs that they are 'getting' what you are asking or talking about.
- Find a quiet place for discussions. Background noise can make communication more difficult.
- Use open-ended questions to get feedback and to check that you have been understood.
- Speak clearly, but don't exaggerate your lip and mouth movements – this makes speech-reading harder.
- Use positive body language and facial expressions to enhance what you are saying.
- Learn sign language – it is one of the official languages in New Zealand!

EYESIGHT OR SPEECH IMPAIRMENTS

For eyesight issues, think about how the assessment situation is set up (visual aids, lighting in the room, whether they need questions read out to them etc).

For a trainee with a speech impairment (such as a stutter) consider ways you can encourage them to participate fully in both training and assessment, such as giving you questions in writing if they are reluctant to speak, building in plenty of time between tasks or topics for those who may be shy about asking questions or contributing information.

Be patient, and don't put words into the person's mouth, especially during assessment tasks.



Always act respectfully and focus on building confidence in the individual trainee so you can encourage them to 'open up' about any difficulties they may be having.

For more guidance around helping trainees prepare for assessment, refer to the Trainee Readiness Information Sheet at www.skillsactive.org.nz, click on 'Assessors' and then 'Best Practice Assessment'.



HELPFUL WEBSITES

Use these websites for some practical advice about helping staff with LLN or other needs.

Skills Highway at www.skillshighway.govt.nz/

Workbase at www.workbase.org.nz

Literacy Aotearoa at www.literacy.org.nz

National Centre of Literacy and Numeracy for Adults at:
www.literacyandnumeracyforadults.com/

From Australia, on LLN in the workplace: www.ideasthatwork.com.au/what-works-for-lln

From the UK, some excellent support for language and numeracy skill building, **BBK Skillswise** at:
www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/o/

Learn more about New Zealand Sign Language at <http://nzsl.tki.org.nz/> or
Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand at <http://www.deaf.org.nz/>

The Equal Opportunities Trust at www.eootrust.org.nz/ has some useful information about diversity in the workplace.





MY NOTES

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