



Improving authenticity in assessment

A practical fact sheet for trainers and assessors

Authenticity in assessment protects the value of learner outcomes. It helps trainers and assessors make sound decisions about what a learner can do in practice, not just what they can describe in theory.

Under the *Standards for Registered Training Organisation (RTOs) 2025*, authenticity means the assessor is assured that a VET student's assessment evidence is the original and genuine work of that VET student. In practice, authenticity also means designing assessments so that the task, the evidence, and the judgement clearly connect to real work requirements.

What does authenticity in assessment mean?

In mining and automotive contexts, authenticity has 2 main meanings. Firstly, there is a compliance meaning derived from the Rules of Evidence, which concerns verifying whether a learner's performance is their own. The second meaning relates to the application in a real-world setting. In this way, the assessment can only be authentic if it reflects typical work activities and common workplace conditions.

Ensuring authentic assessment is more than just preventing plagiarism or other forms of academic cheating. It is about establishing systems and processes that enable learners to demonstrate the required skills and knowledge in a way that is believable, relevant to the job, and indicative of their own practice.

How to protect the integrity of learner outcomes

The integrity of learner outcomes is protected when assessment is centred on competency in practice. Learner outcomes lose credibility when the evidence is thin, generic or disconnected from the real task. In mining and automotive training, a learner may pass a written quiz yet still be unable to identify a hazard, diagnose a fault, document the work properly or respond to a changing situation on the job. Therefore, a robust assessment process captures the application of knowledge.

This should involve using a range of evidence to establish a pattern of performance, directly observing practical activities where possible, limiting over-prompting, and checking whether the learner can repeat the standard more than once under normal workplace conditions.



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Common challenges in maintaining authenticity

| Challenge | Mining example | Automotive example |
|--|--|---|
| Assessment that is too theory-heavy | A worker can explain the isolation steps, but cannot correctly carry out the site sequence in the field. | A learner can describe a service procedure, but misses checks or records findings poorly during the job. |
| Over-reliance on templates or checklists | A generic observation sheet does not capture site-specific controls, permits or escalation points. | A checklist confirms that a task was completed but does not indicate the quality of inspection, judgement, or handover standards. |
| Assessment under unrealistic conditions | The task is assessed away from the work area with no realistic time, equipment or communication demands. | Fault-finding is assessed only from written scenarios rather than from a live or realistic vehicle problem. |
| Too much assessor prompting | The assessor talks the worker through each step, so the evidence does not show independent performance. | The trainer repeatedly reminds the worker what to check next, which hides gaps in competence. |
| Weak verification of evidence ownership | A third-party report is accepted without enough supporting evidence from direct observation. | Job documentation is submitted as evidence without checking who completed the work and when. |

Maintaining authenticity is not always straightforward. Time pressure, busy workplaces and the need to assess larger groups can all push assessment towards convenience rather than rigor. However, ignoring these pressures will increase the risk to both learning outcomes and workplace performance.



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Things trainers can do to improve authenticity in assessment

- Map each assessment task to the real work requirement. The closer the task is to the actual workplace activity, the stronger the evidence's authenticity.
- Use practical application as a core evidence source, not an add-on. Observe the learner completing the task in an appropriate environment, wherever possible.
- Contextualise tools for the specific workplace. Mining tasks should reflect site procedures, equipment, hazards and escalation pathways. Automotive tasks should reflect workshop process, quality checks, documentation and customer contact.
- Use a range of evidence. Combine observation, targeted questioning, workplace documents and, where suitable, third-party input. Do not rely on one short event if it does not show enough depth or consistency.
- Be careful with simulation. Use it when needed for safety, access, or practicality, but make sure it reflects workplace conditions as closely as possible.
- Control prompting. Clarify the task if needed but record the level of support given. Repeated prompting reduces the authenticity of the evidence as proof of independent competence.
- Validate assessment tools and decisions. Industry input, pre-use review, and structured validation help confirm that the task is relevant, clear, and capable of producing high-quality evidence.
- Follow up after assessment in the workplace. Ongoing observation helps confirm that competent performance continues beyond the assessment event.

Tips for mining and automotive trainers

- In mining, include the actual control measures, permits, communications and stop-work expectations that apply on site.
- In automotive settings, assess the full task from preparation through to documentation and handover, not just the technical step in the middle.
- Use plain language in instructions, questions and feedback so the learner knows exactly what is required and what standard is being judged.
- Keep brief but specific notes on what the learner did. Good notes make the judgement more defensible and easier to validate later.



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Key Message

Authenticity in assessment is about more than proving that evidence is the learner's own work. It is also about designing an assessment that reflects real work performance. In mining and automotive settings, the strongest assessment decisions are based on practical, contextualised, and well-verified evidence that demonstrates what the learner can do safely, correctly, and consistently. When authenticity is strong, learner outcomes are more credible, employers have more confidence in the result and training better supports safe, capable performance on the job.



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