

Understanding Validation and Moderation

Validation and moderation, though often used interchangeably, are two distinct processes in the context of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). Timing is a critical factor in distinguishing between these two procedures:

- **Validation** is a process of quality review and is an ongoing evaluation of the assessment system used by an RTO. It can occur before, during, and after assessment, focusing on the validity of both assessment practices and judgements.
- **Moderation** is a process of quality control that typically takes place after an assessment judgement but before results are communicated to the student.

Validation

Under the Standards for RTOs 2015, validation is intended for future improvement rather than adjustment or change to assessment outcomes. The goal is to verify if the RTO's assessment tools have produced valid, reliable, sufficient, current, and authentic evidence.

Clauses 1.9 -1.11 prescribe specific validation requirements for RTOs. These standards mandate a systematic, documented, and implemented validation schedule for their assessment practices and judgements. A validation schedule should span a five-year period, with each training product reviewed at least once in this timeframe. It should outline:

- Timeframes for carrying out the plan
- Method to identify the volume of documents to be validated
- Documentation and action plan for validation outcomes
- Identification of individuals allowed to participate in the validation process

The Standards for RTOs 2015 also stipulate who can participate in validation activities and the experience and qualifications they must hold.

Review of Assessment Practices

Validators should ensure the assessment tools:

- Comply with the assessment requirements of the relevant training product
- Adhere to the principles of assessment (fairness, flexibility, validity, and reliability)
- Are designed to produce valid, sufficient, authentic, and current evidence
- Are appropriate to the context, conditions, and level of difficulty of the tasks
- Provide clear instruction about the tasks and guidance about evidence gathering
- Outline possible reasonable adjustments
- Provide instructions for the assessor on collecting evidence, making a judgement, and recording outcomes
- Are supported with evidence criteria to judge performance quality
- Comply with the requirements of the RTO's assessment system

Moderation

The moderation process is an essential part of assessment evaluations in educational settings, serving to maintain consistency in judgments and to ensure continuous improvements in the assessment tools. This process involves a review of students' evidence, which has already been judged for competency, from the same assessment tasks.

Moderation is primarily conducted to address difficulties that may have arisen during the application of an assessment tool, to maintain consistency in decisions made by different assessors, and to implement continuous improvements. Following is an overview of the process:

- **Review of Evidence:** Assessors initiate the moderation by reviewing evidence from students' assessments that have already received a judgment of competency. This evidence is obtained from students who have completed the same assessment tasks.
- **Comparison of Judgments:** The judgements made on individual assessments are compared. This process helps to ensure a uniform standard of grading across different assessments.

- **Discussion of Decisions:** Any severity in the decisions made during the assessment will be discussed among the assessors. This discussion ensures that all assessors are on the same page, and any discrepancies are clarified and adjusted.
- **Agreement on Outcomes:** Once all the assessments have been compared and discussed, an agreement is reached on the final outcomes.

Note: This VET Fact Sheet provides general information and should not be considered as legal advice.