How to use competency standards to assess competence

You might use any part of the competencies to measure competence. You need to be familiar with the content of the training package, especially as it relates to the types of evidence which might be considered appropriate.

The registered training organisation (RTO) will provide trainees and assessors with a variety of tools to help them collect evidence. The construction of a variety of tools is covered in “how to construct assessment items”.

These may be used:
- by the learner only
- by the learner in collaboration with other learners, or more experienced workers
- by the learner in collaboration with a workplace assessor
- by assessors alone
- as either permanent records of assessment
- or simply to collect evidence during observation before the permanent record is made

People may need to prove they are competent:
- to gain exemption from training
- to show that training has met its desired outcomes
- to gain a job where the competencies are required
- or just to prove to themselves that they have learned things in their current employment

It is important to understand the way that evidence of competence is gathered and presented as proof. The proof of competence is in the demonstration - working to the standard required in the set of competencies.

Competency standards encompass a much broader notion of work required than merely the ability to perform tasks. Competency includes the capacity to manage a number and variety of tasks, to manage contingencies and to perform effectively in a whole work role/work environment.”(from the Competency Standards Guide)

In assessing individuals as capable of working as well as they need to work in aged care or disability services requires the provision of appropriate evidence. There are a variety of ways to collect this evidence, to record it and to preserve it for the individual, the industry and the training providers.

There are lots of tools included here, but you don’t need to use them, you can make up your own. If you know the context of a workplace well, you can probably develop something that will be
even more helpful to the candidate and to the assessor, because it follows the routines and protocols of a particular workplace.

The performance criteria of standards are a guide to assessors, but they do not infer assessment strategies or techniques. The range of variables and evidence guide of each unit provide additional information to enable contextualising of the assessment of units whilst maintaining consistency in outcomes. (from the Competency Standards Guide)

**Assessment of competencies ‘globally’**

In human services, the vulnerability of the client group means that there are competencies which are interdependent. That is, they need to be seen in concert.

At levels II and III, you will find competencies about orientation to the area of work. These competencies, because they relate to values and attitudes as put into practice in the workplace, need to be assessed every time that the candidate is doing anything.

Commitment and respect, responsiveness and equity cannot be assessed in isolation from the workplace activities which give substance to them.

For this reason we recommend the use of a workplace journal. This allows the candidate to identify their actions and to reflect on the values, knowledge and skills underlying them, and self correct, or seek help to correct if there is a discrepancy between behaviours expected and demonstrated.

You will find samples of journal pages in “how to construct assessment items”.

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So, the performance criteria are what the candidate actually has to do. If you have no other ‘test paper’ use them as a checklist. The evidence guide will help you know ways to test them.

Here is an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHCACA1A</th>
<th>Provide care support to aged people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>This is the competency standard</strong></td>
<td><strong>These are the things that you need to do to meet the standard - they are called elements</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Establish and maintain an appropriate relationship with aged person</td>
<td>1. Establish and maintain an appropriate relationship with aged person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide appropriate support to the aged person</td>
<td>2. Provide appropriate support to the aged person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Assist in maintaining an environment that enables maximum independent living</td>
<td>3. Assist in maintaining an environment that enables maximum independent living</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It comes from the training package where it appears in this form:

**CHCAC1A  Provide care support to aged people**

This standard talks about providing support and assistance to maintain quality care for aged people.

- Here is the element again
- these are the individual activities the candidate needs to demonstrate - they could be a checklist for you to use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Performance criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Establish and maintain an appropriate relationship with aged person | • Self introduction occurs appropriately  
• Courtesy towards the aged person is demonstrated  
• All dealings with the aged person aim at generating a trusting relationship  
• Demonstrates respect for the individual differences of the aged person  
• The aged person’s own interests, rights and decision making are supported  
• Confidentiality and privacy of aged person is maintained within organisational guidelines  
• Takes part in short interpersonal exchanges with aged person to establish, maintain and develop relationships |

So, a checklist for documenting the assessment, might be developed like this:

1. Take the standard
2. Identify each element
3. Put the performance criteria for each element into a checklist with columns to ✓ if criteria are demonstrated or not demonstrated
4. Make these columns big enough for the assessor to make notes of actions or omissions to talk to the candidate about during the provision of feedback following the assessment
5. Under the checklist, list those issues found in the range of variables which are pertinent to the element, so that the candidate and assessor know what is meant by some of the descriptive words used in the performance criteria
6. Add any criteria which are identified as critical to the assessment - preferably in a shaded box, or somehow highlighted, so that they are obvious to the candidate and the assessor
7. Make lines on the back so that the candidate can describe their evidence, or the assessor can record comments and prior to feedback and the assessment can be signed by the candidate and the assessor as an accurate record
Assessors should be familiar with the underpinning knowledge identified in the standard, so that they can help the individual who does not demonstrate competence to identify what more needs to be done before assessment is attempted again.

In developing checklists, be very careful that you are not increasing the assessment load, or taking apart things that must be assessed together.

Also ensure that where possible, attitudes and values (which are explicit in some competencies, and only implicit in others) are commented on to the candidate by making a note of them in the checklist.

Some people put the underpinning knowledge, or the range of variables, or other prompts onto the checklist as well. These prompts keep the assessor from comparing novice function unfavourably with experienced function.

It also prompts the assessor to give feedback across the range of variables to the candidate, or perhaps, question the candidate about a range of instances, and thereby avoid the need for multiple assessment.
So, a checklist for documenting the assessment, might look like this:

For the standard:  
**CHCAC1A  Provide care support to aged people**

And the element:  
1. Establish and maintain an appropriate relationship with aged person

You should do the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE CRITERIA</th>
<th>DEMONSTRATED</th>
<th>NOT DEMONSTRATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self introduction occurs appropriately</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtesy towards the aged person is demonstrated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All dealings with the aged person aim at generating a trusting relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates respect for the individual differences of the aged person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The aged person’s own interests, rights and decision making are supported</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality and privacy of aged person is maintained within organisational guidelines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes part in short interpersonal exchanges with aged person to establish, maintain and develop relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes to guide you:

*When self introduction occurs, the following may need to be considered:*

- cultural background of aged person
- customs familiar to aged person
- any physical or mental problems which may hinder communication, such as deafness, dementia

*Individual differences may be:*

- culture
- age
- economic
- social
- gender
- physical
- emotional
- intellectual
- language
- spiritual

*Rights may be detailed in:*

- service/outcomes standards documents
- legislation
- organisational policies and practices

*Short interpersonal exchanges will be appropriate to the cultural and individual differences of the aged person and may include:*

- chatting in friendly manner
- inquiring about the aged person’s health
- short casual exchanges

*Critical aspects of assessment:*
• works within role and responsibilities in a manner which accommodates and accepts individual differences of aged people
For the standard:
CHCAC1A  Provide care support to aged people (CONTINUED)

And the element:
2. Provide appropriate support to the aged person

You should do the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE CRITERIA</th>
<th>DEMONSTRATED</th>
<th>NOT DEMONSTRATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All assistance and support is in accordance with organisational procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All support provided to the aged person is in accordance with of the aged person’s needs, rights and self determination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assistance is provided for the aged person’s participation in social, recreational and educational programs and activities as requested</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assistance is provided with celebrations and special events as requested</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support is provided to the aged person in meeting religious, cultural, sexual, spiritual and ceremonial needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assistance is sought when it is not possible to provide appropriate support to the aged person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes to guide you:
Rights may be detailed in:
• service/outcomes standards documents
• legislation
• organisational policies and practices

Assistance may include:
• providing information and advice
• accompanying or providing specific services such as transport
• encouragement and support for decisions and actions

Critical aspects of assessment:
• works within role and responsibilities in a manner which accommodates and accepts individual differences of aged people
For the standard:
CHCAC1A Provide care support to aged people (CONTINUED)

And the element:
3. Assist in maintaining an environment that enables maximum independent living

You should do the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE CRITERIA</th>
<th>DEMONSTRATED</th>
<th>NOT DEMONSTRATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All support provided to aged people enables them to direct their own care where appropriate, and is within organisational procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assistance is provided in maintaining a safe and healthy environment, including minimising physical dangers and risk of infections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assistance is provided as required with meals and refreshments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The aged person is provided with support in maintaining a clean and comfortable environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Response to situations of risk to health and safety is in accordance with organisational procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes to guide you:

Needs of the aged person may include:
• physical, sexual and emotional
• support and care
• financial
• household assistance and maintenance
• religious

Assistance may include:
• providing information and advice
• accompanying or providing specific services such as transport
• encouragement and support for decisions and actions

Maximum wellbeing may include:
• independent living
• observation of own customs and cultural practices
• coming and going from environment with safety

Critical aspects of assessment:
• works within role and responsibilities in a manner which accommodates and accepts individual differences of aged people
And the backside of the assessment record might look like this:

Evidence offered of competence by candidate if requesting Recognition of prior learning

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We are agreed that the candidate is:

COMPETENT  NOT YET COMPETENT

CANDIDATE ___________________________________

ASSESSOR ___________________________________