



**Adjustments to CANTA Quality Assurance Criteria  
and  
CVQ Assessment Guidelines**

*(A response to COVID-19 and its impact on TVET/CVQ delivery)*

**August 2020**



# Contents

- Adjustments to CVQ Assessment Guidelines ..... 5
  - 1.0 CANTA Assessment Adjustment Statement ..... 5
  - 2.0 Preparation and Planning..... 5
  - 3.0 Assessment Requirements ..... 6
  - 4.0 Electronic Options ..... 9
  - 5.0 Types of Assessment Adjustments ..... 11
  - 6.0 Interaction with the External Verifier..... 13



# Adjustments to CVQ Assessment Guidelines

## 1.0 CANTA Assessment Adjustment Statement

COVID-19 has presented extraordinary circumstances that have required CANTA to review aspects of the delivery of CVQs and make adjustments to the CANTA Quality Assurance Criteria Guidelines (2015); in particular, to assessment procedures and the collection of evidence. As the health and safety of candidates is of paramount importance, the use of electronic and digital technologies throughout the assessment process is encouraged.

The adjustments and recommendations that are made do not remove any of the existing requirements for the delivery of the learning outcomes or assessment criteria detailed within occupational qualification standards. In this regard, Awarding Bodies (i.e. NTAs approved to award CVQs) shall ensure that TVET/CVQ training delivery remains fit for purpose, and that assessments remain robust and in keeping with the CBET approach where learners' evidence is Valid, Authentic and Sufficient to fully cover learning outcomes and assessment criterion.

These adjustments will remain in place until otherwise advised by CANTA.

## 2.0 Preparation and Planning

The following steps should be taken to plan and prepare for any adjustments to the assessment process, given the onset of COVID-19, bearing in mind that the health and safety of the candidate must be a priority in making any adjustments, that the assessment must remain fair, and that no candidate should be disadvantaged or have advantage over other candidates.

### **Step 1: Conduct a Risk Assessment**

The Management of the training provider/facility should conduct a risk assessment to determine the level of risks associated with the conduct of trainee assessments. It should include assessments for trainees on work experience and trainee placements, to determine if the activity should be waived or adjusted, e.g. allowing learners to undertake shorter periods of attachment in the workplace and how this would affect the assessment process.

### **Step 2: Review Assessment Policies and Procedures**

Training providers should review their assessment policies and procedures to accommodate changes in the learner's training and/or workplace situation.

### **Step 3: Meet with Instructors and Assessors**

It is advisable that the CVQ coordinator or the internal verifier (individuals with responsibility for assessments) meets with instructors and assessors by skill areas (using the appropriate digital technology e.g. Zoom, Skype) to review and adjust assessment instruments and assessment approaches, bearing in mind the need to maintain the principles of assessment while ensuring the health and safety of trainees and candidates.

### **Step 4: Document and Communicate**

On the reopening of the facility, and before any assessments are undertaken, all of the changes and adjustments made should be documented and communicated to all stakeholders in the assessment process (instructors, assessors, internal and external verifiers, trainees, candidates, employers). The external verifier may ask for evidence in the verification process.

## **3.0 Assessment Requirements**

- The assessment cycle should not change as a result of the COVID-19 situation. The learner and assessor should still agree on the assessment **PLAN**, observing social distancing, or by using available technology. The assessor shall **CONDUCT** the assessment in order to make a decision about the learner's competence. The assessor must provide **FEEDBACK** about his/her decision to the learner and finally, **REVIEW** the progress towards competence.
- Valid and reliable evidence of competence is required for all units that contain competency learning outcomes. Whenever possible, in the first instance, assessors should attempt to meet unit assessment requirements. Attention should be paid to the type of assessment being used, in order to ensure that it is still 'fit for purpose' and will generate the requisite evidence to demonstrate competence.

- Assessors are encouraged to emphasise the practical application of the assessment criteria, providing a realistic scenario for learners to adopt and make maximum use of practical activities.
- Where a unit requires observation as the primary and/or predominant assessment method, this should be attempted. Where it is not possible to carry out direct observations, assessors are allowed to adapt assessment methods and consider other valid and reliable methods where it is appropriate and convenient to do so.
- In all instances of adjustments or changes, information should be captured on the **Reasonable Adjustment Form** (to be uploaded electronically) and changes agreed and signed off by all relevant parties. Internal and external verifiers will request these forms as part of their verification exercises to ensure the maintenance of quality in the system.

The following are additional assessment requirements:

- In the event that it is still possible for assessors to conduct assessments via observation, they must ensure that social distancing guidelines are followed in full. Training providers are advised to delay assessments until they are able to conduct assessments in a manner that adheres to the Government's health and safety guidelines on social distancing.
- The delivery of CVQs often relies upon direct observation as the best form of evidence to support assessment decisions. During social distancing, this method of assessment may, in some facilities and instances, not meet with the current CARPHA/MOH/MOE Government guidance. Therefore, assessors should be open to other methods of assessment that would cover the requirements of the unit or qualification (**see 5.0**).
- Assessment planning should consider methods that take the individual circumstances of each learner and his/her respective training environment, including the availability of technology, into consideration. These methods should not put any student at an advantage, or prevent facilitating access to all.
- Depending on timetabling and scheduling of programmes, training facilities should, if required, extend learner time for CVQ training programmes. This is justified by the need to have smaller training groups in each classroom, workshop, or

laboratory in order to reduce the spread of infection among trainees if such cases arise.

- Where feasible, practical assessments should be adapted to ensure that activities take place in large rooms or in outside spaces where social distancing may be maintained.
- CVQ coordinators or internal verifiers should encourage the electronic banking of unit assessments throughout training and assessment in order to mitigate the risk of future disruption.
- Where feasible, consider using online rather than paper-based tests, or carrying out assessments remotely rather than face-to-face, once the requisite infrastructure is in place and there is adherence to quality standards.
- Each trainee should have a logbook in which ALL graded assignments (theory and practicals) are continuously documented as evidence of performance (continuous assessment). These may be uploaded into an e-portfolio for submission to the external verifier or Awarding Body. The level of competence is easily determined on completion of the CVQ training programme and will safeguard against future disruption.
- Awarding Bodies should encourage the use of e-portfolios for submission by candidates on completion of the CVQ programme.
- Training providers and/or assessors should widen the assessment window when assessments are being conducted, to accommodate greater flexibility (the period of time during which assessment is conducted).
- Where group assessments are usually conducted (e.g. Data Operations, Performance Arts), candidates should remain in the same group, maintaining social distancing practices.
- Assessors should consider changing the way assessments in a group setting are conducted in order to accommodate social distancing (e.g. I.T. Construction).





*An assessor and candidate observing social distancing*

## 4.0 Electronic Options

The following electronic options available to assessors should be considered for use:

- ***Use of Video***

This is an option for all elements of the assessment process and communication with learners, witnesses, and employers. It should be used to capture professional discussion and/or witness testimony, as well as to observe naturally occurring work activity by a colleague who is following social distance requirements. All parties must be identified and authenticated, and a recorded timeline included. In addition:

- the assessor must have agreement from all parties that they agree to being recorded
- the date, time and location must be recorded to give context to the video
- the end date and time of the recording must also be stated
- the assessor will need to be assured that when being used as a tool for observation, the video is of the learner carrying out the work

- the video needs to be clear and recorded at a distance that clearly shows the task being carried out, so that an assessment decision may be made confidently
- the video evidence must be accompanied by an assessment decision that demonstrates it has been assessed and that feedback has been given to the learner
- the video must be of the actual work being carried out in real time and not a synopsis of the work done when completed (if being used as an observation)

- ***Use of Audio Link***

This is an option that may be used for all elements of the assessment process with learners, witnesses and employers. Audio links may be used to capture interviews, professional discussion, oral questioning and/or witness testimony, although not suitable for observation. All parties must be identified and authenticated, and the audio must include a recorded timeline. The process is as follows:

- the assessor should introduce all members on the call and state their role and the purpose for the call
- the assessor should confirm that all members on the call are comfortable with being recorded and with the purpose of the recording
- the assessor should open the discussion with the time, date and location
- the assessor should close the discussion with the end time and date of the call
- when being used to capture an interview, oral questioning or professional discussion, the assessor must be able to confidently validate and authenticate the evidence being provided to enable an assessment decision; therefore, the assessor should have some other evidence to use, to plan and drive the conversation

**Note: This method is not suitable for observations.**

## 5.0 Types of Assessment Adjustments

Adaptations to assessment should not undermine the validity and reliability of the qualifications (e.g. the content to be taught **should not be reduced**). All assessment principles should still be adhered to.

The following provide details of the adaptations that may be used by the assessor to provide evidence of the candidate's performance:

### **Conduct Virtual Assessments**

Practical observations should be undertaken remotely using audio visual remote technology, if the infrastructure exists, allowing assessors to view the learner at work.

Learners may also use video technology and software to record themselves demonstrating competence or skills, providing verbal narrative to explain what they are doing. A third party should sign off on the authenticity of the recording.

### **Expert Witness Testimony**

Expert witness testimony refers to the use of additional expert witness testimonies from qualified individuals to act as evidence in place of other assessment activities (e.g. direct observation). These may be obtained remotely using digital recording devices, or using fully verified emails from employers, supervisors, managers or other relevant stakeholders within, or associated with, the organisation.

Assessors should plan to capture witness testimonies around actual workplace activities rather than unit assessment criteria, and ensure that statements contain sufficient detail to confirm the standard of work and competences demonstrated.

### **Interviews, Guided and Professional Discussions**

Interviews, professional and/or guided discussions may be used to create work-based evidence and used on occasions when competence needs to be demonstrated where it is not possible for the learner to be observed. These methods may also be used instead of a practical assessment. Prior to COVID-19, interviews and professional discussions were typically limited to CVQ Level 3 and higher. They may now be extended to CVQ Levels 1 and 2. The internal verifier should ensure that the level of questioning used is suitable for the particular CVQ level and is fit for purpose.

This activity may be captured using digital recording devices (video or audio). Professional discussions should also be considered to supplement existing evidence, such as previous assessor observations.

### **Verbal Personal Statements/Reflective Accounts**

Verbal personal statements and reflective accounts by the candidate are other options that he/she may present as evidence of demonstrated competence. These may be recorded and submitted electronically to the assessor following the protocol outlined.

Recordings must provide an actual example of an activity that has taken place. This evidence should be supported by relevant evidence from the workplace, where available.

### **Simulation**

Simulation is used to assess activities that would typically have occurred in a certain environment (e.g. real work) where natural work evidence is unlikely to occur. In the past, simulation exercises were discouraged, but assessors have the option of utilising simulation at this time. If simulation is used, the assessment instruments created by the assessor should be reliable and fit for purpose, and the assessment tasks and activities should enable learners to produce valid, sufficient and reliable evidence that relates directly to the specified criteria.

A record of all simulated activities should be maintained and made available to the verifier as part of the verification activity.

### **Oral Questioning/Question and Answer**

As an assessment option, the question-and-answer session should be conducted by an assessor who is occupationally competent, and in a way that authenticates the responses are the candidate's own. These will need to be recorded in written or verbal format and linked to the assessment criteria. The assessment plan should have the details of the questions to be asked and the anticipated response.

Where tests are multiple-choice in nature, these may be conducted online, or the multiple-choice questions may be rephrased into open questions.

Where questions have images or tables, these may either be shared with the candidate via screen sharing, or printed and rephrased around the image.

### **Portfolio Presentation**

The use of e-portfolios is encouraged where possible. Videos and recordings are acceptable, utilising the same procedures for electronic options (**see 4.0**). Simulation assessment should not be the predominant source of evidence of the competency in the portfolio. In preparation, assessors will discuss the evidence required with candidates in the planning stage and ensure that this evidence is presented in the assessment plans.

## **6.0 Interaction with the External Verifier**

- The external verifier will remain in contact with the internal verifier through the manager/principal of the training facility, primarily through electronic means (telephone calls, Zoom Meetings etc.).
- Alternative arrangements should be agreed by all relevant parties and noted in the assessment plan. The plans should be digitised if possible, which makes them more easily accessible for verification.
- Electronic records of all simulated activities should be maintained and made available to the external verifier as part of the verification process.
- The external verifier should provide additional support through discussions and verification meetings, in monitoring the various assessment approaches that have been used by assessors in the facility.
- All logbooks and portfolios must be retained for sampling by the external verifier on behalf of the Awarding Body, which will send instructions on sampling requirements and quality audits visits that may be conducted virtually if physical presence is unavailable.

These adjustments shall remain in effect until revised by CANTA.

**Adjustments to CANTA Quality Assurance Criteria  
and  
CVQ Assessment Guidelines**  
*(A response to COVID-19 and its impact on TVET/CVQ delivery)*

**August 2020**