Finding evidence of workplace performance

Training Packages specify the requirements for competent workplace performance. The best way to assess workplace performance is to get evidence from a student’s workplace – either by direct observation or other less direct means. But there can be practical difficulties with this, and the students may not have relevant employment.

If you are able to go to the students’ workplaces, getting evidence of their performance is simple – you can observe the students while they work, you can ask them questions, you can get them to undertake work-based projects, you can check workplace documents they have completed, and you ask supervisors about their performance in their regular work.

But what about those challenging situations where you are not able to gather workplace evidence?

Try one of these possible solutions:

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| 1. No students in a group have relevant employment | • Build work placement or projects in the community into the course:  
  o Set specific tasks related to the units for completion during the placement  
  o Visit the student during the placement to observe work performance  
  o Ask the student’s supervisor for a report (you will need to prepare a checklist written in workplace-friendly language for the supervisor)  
  o Get the students to complete a journal or work activities record during the placement  
  • Encourage the students to find appropriate opportunities for simulated work practice, for example:  
    o Voluntary work for a sporting or community organisation  
    o Voluntary work for an employer (perhaps a neighbour or relative) | • Some sections would never assess a student as competent for a qualification unless they were able to be observed in a workplace – either in paid work, on work placement or during a community project. (For example Child Studies, Community Services)  
  • It takes teacher time to visit students on placement. Use the hours allocated to teaching during the work placement week to visit and assess each student |
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| **2. Some students in a group have relevant employment, others don’t** | • For those students who have relevant employment, evidence could include:  
  o Observation while they are at work  
  o Workplace documents indicating the outcome of work performed  
  o Work-based projects the students have completed  
  o Report from a supervisor related to the unit outcomes  
  • For the other students in the group, encourage or even require them to undertake work placement. See the information about work placement above (1).  
  • The Case Management approach used by IT teachers at Richmond College enables them to learn about their students' employment circumstances and possibilities and to negotiate appropriate assessment strategies to suit. | • Use the work placement period to gain time to visit employed students at their work for their assessments.  
• For the supervisor’s report, prepare a checklist written in workplace-friendly language for the supervisor. There is an example of this in the Company Z assessment tool under the Examples tab. |
| **3. College-based apprentices and trainees** | • Delay the start of the delivery of classes at the beginning of the semester to visit students in their workplace. At this visit:  
  o Establish a relationship with the student’s employer/supervisor  
  o Determine the scope of the student’s current work in relation to the requirements of the qualification. Record your findings – this will enable you to reduce the delivery and assessment time required at the college for these content areas.  
  o Describe to the student and their supervisor the work activities that student will need to undertake during the course.  
  o Enlist the support of the supervisor to provide reports on the performance of the student.  
  • At appropriate times during the course, contact the employer regarding the assessment of the student, including:  
  o Verification that the student has completed specified work activities  
  o Completion of the prepared student report  
  • Use **new technologies** to collect evidence (see below)  
• One trade section (Hairdressing, Nepean) have arranged that their Stage 3 apprentices don’t attend college at all for their last semester. Teachers visit the students as they undertake a range of work activities. Students upload evidence to their ePortfolio during this period, and receive feedback from teachers. | • Not only will this approach enable you to establish arrangements for the collection of workplace evidence, but it will improve the quality of the relationship with employers  
• Again, for the supervisor’s report, prepare a checklist written in workplace-friendly language for the supervisor. |
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| 4. Distance students | ● There are additional practical difficulties for gathering workplace evidence for distance students.  
● Use **learning technologies** to collect evidence of work performance, including:  
  o [SkillsLocker](website) – the new TAFENSW platform for capturing evidence of performance via computers and mobile devices  
  o E-portfolios with photos, videos and supervisor reports  
  o Videos and photos of student work submitted or uploaded to a website. These can utilise point-of-view glasses or mobile phones  
● Supervisor’s reports can authenticate this evidence. | ● A description of the use of ePortfolios for Assessment is included in the under the Examples tab.                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 5. Simulation in a college | Where the circumstances don’t enable evidence of workplace evidence to be considered, simulations are the next best thing. The challenge is to create simulations that closely resemble real workplaces.  
● Simulations may include:  
  o College-based facilities where work activities are demonstrated that replicate the workplace. For example, training restaurants, trade workshops, children’s activity centres, model offices. The simulation is made more lifelike where members of the public are the customers.  
  o Role-plays where students demonstrate work skills. This can apply in many situations, including interviewing skills for community services and management students, providing advice about fitness techniques, dealing with difficult customers.  
  o Responding to a case study. A well-designed case study can incorporate complex work-like situations and dilemmas. Students can be asked to demonstrate skills or to describe how they would act in response to the case study.  
  o Preparing business documents. Students can prepare work-like documents in response to a scenario (such as spreadsheets, accounting documents, OHS incident reports). The more the scenario and simulated work tasks match a real workplace, the better the quality of the evidence gathered. | ● Check that the Training Package allows for the use of simulations for assessment.  
This will be included in the Evidence Guide of the unit. There may be specific instructions about how simulations are to be used.  
● Consider the opportunities for assessment of multiple units in your simulation – an effective activity simulating real work is likely to be able to provide evidence of diverse skills covered by multiple units as well as employability skills. |