Assessment in FET for schools and FET for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

CHAPTER 4

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Chapter objectives

In this chapter we focus on

- assessment in FET for schools and FET for TVET
- informal assessment and formal assessment
- various methods of collecting assessment evidence in Grades 10–12
- recording and reporting learner performance
- internal continuous assessment, integrated summative assessment tasks, and the external national examination.

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References

4.1 INTRODUCTION

No matter how much effort we put into the teaching of our learners, it is assessments that really matter to them. They will learn what they think they are going to be tested on. The way in which they are assessed will therefore determine whether learners will adopt a surface approach to learning or a deeper approach. If we want them to engage in a deeper approach to learning, we have to assess in such a way that it will foster this type of learning.

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In good assessment practice, the value of assessment *for* learning, as opposed to merely assessment *of* learning, is recognised. Put differently, learning *for* assessment and learning *from* assessment are equally important. As such, assessment becomes part of the learning process and is not just seen as an add-on experience at the end of a learning process. Learners need to know whether they are making progress or not, and they need to know what they need to do to improve their work. They will be able to realise this if they are assessed on a continuous basis and if assessment and feedback are considered to be part of the learning process.

If we want to assess holistic learning, we should assess the process of learning as well as the products of learning. This implies that learners have to be assessed while they are engaged in tasks, and not just at the end of a learning programme. We also need evidence that learners can apply and use the knowledge that they have. We therefore have to provide opportunities for learners to *demonstrate application.* Assessment is aimed at assessing *actual competencies,* not merely knowledge of content.

Firstly, attention will be given to assessment in FET for schools (the National Senior Certificate) and in section 4.8, specific attention will be given to unique aspects of assessment in FET for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (National Vocational Certificate).

4.2 THE PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT IN FET FOR SCHOOLS

Just like in any other assessment process, the purpose of assessment in FET is manifold. The primary aims are to

- improve teaching and learning
- identify and/or rectify current shortcomings in the learners' performance
- identify and/or rectify barriers to learning
- give feedback to learners, parents, guardians and other stakeholders about learners' progress
- help learners to use the feedback to set targets for improving their performance.

As such, the aim of assessment is *formative* in nature. Because formative assessment practices continuously feed information back to learners to enable them to learn better, this type of assessment is often described as *assessment for learning.* In the CAPS, this type of assessment is called classroom assessment and a distinction is made between informal and formal classroom assessments. In the FET classroom, assessment forms an integral part of teaching and learning. If informal and formal classroom assessment reveals that no progress is taking place, there is still time to adapt the teaching and learning activities to rectify the situation before the final end-of-year assessment takes place.

Assessment that is done with the purpose of checking achievement of competence at the end of a single learning activity, unit, cycle, term, semester or year of learning, is known as summative assessment. Summative assessment can be described as *assessment of learning.* In the CAPS for FET, there is a big focus on end-of-year examinations (which

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count 75% of the total mark for each grade). The Grade 12 examination is in the form of an external examination that is assessed and moderated externally.

In Grades 10 and 11, assessment is done with the purpose of promoting learners to the next grade and giving feedback to parents. In Grade 12, it is done with the purpose of awarding a National Senior Certificate (NSC). Marks obtained at the end of Grade 11 and for the NSC are used for the purpose of awarding bursaries, selecting candidates for particular courses and providing feedback to parents and higher education institutions about learners' performance. It is clear that assessment in Grade 12 has far-reaching consequences for a learner's future.

The division of marks between FET assessments done during the year and the end-of-year assessment is indicated in Table 4.1 (the example is from Geography):

Table 4.1 Summary of formal assessments expected in Grades 10–12 (Geography)

Grade	Formal assessments	Cass (25%)	Final exam (75%)	Total
10	• 3 Assessment tasks • 2 tests • Mid-year examination	3 × 20 = 60 2 × 10 = 20 1 × 20 = 20 **100**		**400**
	• End-of-year examination		Paper 1 = 225 (3 × 75) Paper 2 = 75 **300**	
11	• 3 Assessment tasks • 2 tests • Mid-year examination	3 × 20 = 60 2 × 10 = 20 1 × 20 = 20 **100**		**400**
	• End-of-year examination		Paper 1 = 225 (3 × 75) Paper 2 = 75 **300**	
12	• 3 Assessment tasks • 2 tests • Mid-year examination • Trial examination	3 × 20 = 60 2 × 10 = 20 1 × 10 = 10 1 × 10 = 10 **100**		**400**
	• End-of-year examination		Paper 1 = 225 (3 × 75) Paper 2 = 75 **300**	

Source: Department of Basic Education (2011c)

4.3 DOCUMENTS GUIDING ASSESSMENT IN FET FOR SCHOOLS

There are a number of documents that need to be consulted with regard to statutory requirements for assessment in the FET. These are the *National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades*

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R–12, the *National protocol for assessment Grades R–12,* and the *National Curriculum Statement: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements – Further Education and Training Grades 10–12* for each FET subject.

4.3.1 National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12

The *National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12* (Department of Basic Education, 2011a) describes the requirements and rules for the conferment of the National Senior Certificate (NSC). This document gives information on entrance requirements, subjects and subject combinations, as well as promotion requirements. Subject teachers should in particular take note of the promotion requirements which state that seven subjects should be offered and that candidates must achieve 40% in three of them (of which one must be a Home Language), 30% in another three, and at least the school-based assessment component in the seventh subject.

4.3.2 National protocol for assessment Grades R–12

The *National Protocol for Assessment Grades R–12* (Department of Basic Education, 2011b) serves to regulate recording and reporting in all schools. This document provides a framework for the management of school assessment and school assessment records. It also gives direction on the learner profiles, teacher files, report cards, record sheets and schedules. According to the protocol, teachers have to ensure that learner profiles, teacher files, report cards, record sheets and schedules are correctly created and maintained.

4.3.3 National Curriculum Statement: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements – Further Education and Training Grades 10–12

The *National Curriculum Statement: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements – Further Education and Training Grades 10–12* is unique to each subject in the FET. What makes this extremely useful is that the curriculum and assessment for each subject are combined in one document. In the assessment section, detailed guidelines are given to teachers regarding the types of assessments to be used in the subject, the frequency of assessment and the weight of each assessment. Each subject teacher must make sure that they know this document well, as there are detailed guidelines and requirements regarding every aspect of assessment.

The competences to be achieved (and which must therefore be assessed) are described, and there are detailed prescriptions regarding content, skills and values to be attained. In addition, teachers are supposed to study this document to prepare an annual programme of formal assessment for their subject and grade, to be submitted to the school management team (SMT) before the school year starts.

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4.4 MONITORING, ASSESSMENT, RECORDING, REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY (MARRA)

An analysis of all the above documents reveals that assessment entails a number of activities, such as monitoring progress by means of informal and formal assessment, conducting assessment, and recording and reporting assessment. This is in line with the acronym MARRA, which was developed in England and which stands for monitoring, assessment, recording, reporting and accountability. Looking at the elements of MARRA gives one a good idea of the different components of assessment (Barnes & Hunt, 2003:9):

M **Monitoring** should be done to ensure that learners are making progress and that your teaching is effective. Monitoring is done continuously and incorporates planning, teaching and assessment. It is done by means of formal as well as informal assessment.

A **Assessment** entails the collection of evidence on the performance of learners. This should be done according to the formal year-long programme of assessment (see section 4.5.2).

R **Recording** creates a picture of each learner's progress. Apart from records about learners, you should also keep records of your lesson plans, your schemes of work and your own reflections on assessments.

R **Reporting** assessment results to the learners themselves, parents, other teachers, the Department of Basic Education and the school and wider community is important.

A **Accountability** of you, as an educator – this means that you are accountable to learners, parents, potential employers and the public to provide clear records of the academic progress and achievement of learners, who are, after all, potential employees.

4.5 MONITORING PROGRESS THROUGH INFORMAL AND FORMAL ASSESSMENT

Classroom or School-Based Assessments consist of informal and formal assessments.

4.5.1 Informal assessment

Teachers should assess the learners' progress on a daily basis during learning activities. By merely observing learners *informally*, teachers often realise that learners are on the wrong track and that they need to explain the topic again, that a particular learner is not following what is explained, or that learners are confused. Informal assessment on a daily basis will also tell a teacher which learners are unwilling to participate, or need to be prompted, or need extra support, or are not interested in the work at all. Although this informal type of assessment is mostly unstructured and done spontaneously, it plays a vital role in the classroom. Informal assessment might also be a bit more structured, for instance in the form of worksheets or homework exercises.

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Informal classroom assessment refers to all the information that teachers gather about learners from sources other than formal assessment procedures. The monitoring of learner progress during classroom routine and everyday learning activities is an important form of informal assessment. It is done by marking homework exercises, asking questions or giving learners short assessment tasks to complete individually or in groups. Informal assessment need not necessarily be done by the teacher only. By letting learners do self-assessment or letting them mark each other's work, the teacher as well as the learners can learn a lot about their progress. The teacher does not have to record informal classroom assessments. You can read more about recording of assessments in section 4.7.

Informal assessment is often done to monitor learners while they are doing tasks in the classroom. The value of informal assessments lies in their proactive nature, as they enable a teacher to identify possible learning difficulties or problems with work done in the classroom. This enables the teacher to provide additional support to individual learners or to explain some sections of the work again.

The fact that daily assessment of learners is done in an informal way, does not mean that the teacher does not need to give feedback. Feedback to learners should indicate to them what they can do to improve. It can be given to a whole class or to an individual learner. The learner's performance in informal assessment tasks is a valuable source for providing feedback to parents and other role-players. This should be done especially if the teacher notices that a learner has a barrier to learning, is unwilling to participate in classroom activities, or is not showing any progress at all.

4.5.2 Formal assessment

Apart from informal assessment that should form part of every lesson, the Department of Basic Education (2011c) also requires that a formal year-long programme of assessment should be developed, in order to monitor learners' progress formally and continuously throughout the year.

All assessments in Grades 10 and 11 are School-Based Assessments and are done internally. Assessment undertaken throughout the year counts 25% of the final promotion mark, and the summative examination at the end of the year makes up the remaining 75%. In Grade 12, only 25% of the formal programme of School-Based Assessment is done internally. The remaining 75% of the formal assessment and the moderation of the 25% internal assessment are done externally. The only exception is Life Orientation, where learners are only required to do a number of assignments (School-Based Assessments) throughout the year and no examination is written. The School-Based Assessments are externally moderated.

Although classroom assessments in the FET band comprise only 25% of the total mark, they are important as this is where teachers can include assessment tasks that comply with the requirements of tertiary education and the working world (Gouws & Russel, 2013).

Planning formal assessment should form part of the annual assessment programme. Lesson plans should include reference to assessment tasks, activities, methods and forms of assessment as well as rubrics, rating scales and checklists that will be used to assess learners. Assessment in lesson plans will be informal, as formal assessments are prescribed and are usually done after completion of a topic.

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When developing the programme of assessment, teachers should keep in mind that a wide variety of assessment methods are available for assessing different kinds of competencies. In the next section, a number of methods that are mostly used to assess in FET are discussed.

4.6 METHODS OF COLLECTING ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE IN GRADES 10–12

Teachers are expected to use a variety of assessment methods, activities and instruments. In doing so, they will provide for different learning styles and learner preferences, and make assessments more fair and authentic.

Assessment methods relate to what you (as an assessor) do to gather and evaluate evidence of learners' competence. The assessment method will, to a large extent, be determined by the purpose of the assessment. If the purpose is to assess learners' ability to do something, a practical demonstration, role-play or assessment of a final product should be in order. If the purpose is to assess theoretical knowledge, ask for an essay, a report or journal, or an oral examination. Assessments can be administered practically, orally or in writing. They can take the form of pen and paper assessments, oral questioning, observation of learners, products, peer assessment and self-assessment. The method that you select will determine how the learners will be required to provide their responses or produce evidence. The assessment can, for example, include designing something, repairing something, reporting on something, answering questions orally or in writing, solving problems, demonstrating techniques, doing presentations, observation etc.

In a typical FET lesson plan, assessment will feature in the highlighted areas:

Localising details (subject, grade, time, number of learners)
Aim(s) of the subject (as in the CAPS)
Curriculum content topic (as in the CAPS)
Lesson theme (a curriculum content sub-topic, as in the CAPS, and skills and values to be achieved in the lesson)
Methods (direct instruction, experiment, demonstration, etc.)
Media/teaching and learning aids (used as support materials)

Assessment strategies (what?, when?, where?, how much?, informal methods, assessment task/practical assessment task – motivate choices)

Reduction of the curriculum content (where does it fit in, what are the main points, what content must be included?)
Lesson objectives: instructional objectives (what the teacher will do) and learning objectives (what the learners should be able to do)
Pattern of the lesson
Actualisation of existing knowledge and introduction (recall questions, interesting DVD/pictures/object/activity, setting the scene/preparing the context), stating the problem/issue/challenge/topic

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Explanation/exploration of new subject matter

Actualising (monitoring) the new subject matter (e.g. ask questions to test learners' understanding of new content during lesson – use informal assessment)

Assessment/functionalisation (indicate which informal assessment task/practical assessment task learners must complete for homework and describe the actual assessment in detail)

Assessment instrument (memorandum, rubric, assessment grid, etc. for the above)

Extension tasks (alternative activities for learners with barriers to learning; additional activities for fast learners if applicable)

Formal assessments are not part of lessons and occur at specified times as prescribed.

The following questions should be asked when an assessment strategy is developed:

- Who is going to do the assessment (teacher, self-assessment, peer assessment) and why?
- Where, when and how will the assessment take place (during a lesson, after a lesson, at home)?
- How many assessments are planned?
- What methods of assessment are planned (e.g. in a lesson there could be a number of spontaneous questions, there could be a worksheet and there could be a homework task)?
- How will you take into account individual learning styles, aptitudes and interests?
- Are local values, content and standards reflected in your assessment – i.e. is it authentic?
- How will you make sure that assessments are an integral and ongoing part of the learning process (where do they fit into your assessment plan and type of assessment – informal, formal assessment task or practical assessment task such as test, research project, etc.)?
- Which assessment products and/or activities will be required (written work, oral, presentation, etc.)?
- Which learning intentions will be covered (aims, content topics, skills, values, competencies)?
- How will you make sure that assessments are accurate, objective, valid, fair, manageable and time-efficient?
- Which assessment instruments/tools will be used to assess?
- Which criteria (aligned with learning intentions) will be included in the instrument (aligned with learning intentions)?
- How will you make sure that assessments are appropriate for the developmental level of the learners?
- How will you make sure that assessments are bias-free and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities?

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4.6.1 Selecting the most suitable method

The method of assessment will depend on the competencies (including knowledge, skills and values) to be assessed. You should weigh methods up against each other and decide which method will be the most valid and reliable method (i.e. which method will best assess what you really want to assess).

Keep the following in mind when deciding on the method and accompanying activities to include in the assessment (Van Rooy, 2004):

- Compare a variety of assessment methods in terms of strengths, weaknesses and applications. Cover situations for gathering evidence of
  - knowledge and understanding
  - problem-solving ability
  - practical and technical skills
  - personal and attitudinal skills and values.
- Learners should be given opportunities to develop the skills of demonstrating their competence by means of a variety of activities, for example:
  - Writing answers, a report, a description of a process, a proposed solution to a problem, book reviews, articles, or a case study analysis
  - Answering questions during a practical situation
  - Practical demonstrations of a skill (e.g. dancing, acting)
  - Displaying an end-product, for example, building an electrical circuit, producing a piece of art or a document (an advertisement, brochure or manual, etc.)
  - Giving an oral presentation
  - Performing a role-play or simulation
  - Presentation with visual aids (graphs, drawings, plans, designs, maps, PowerPoint posters, charts, tables, etc.)
  - Explaining, reporting, arguing, describing, debating, criticising, etc.
  - Working in a group

4.6.2 Self-assessment, peer assessment and group assessment

Assessment is best done *with* learners rather than just *to* or *by* them (Barnes & Hunt, 2003:83). This means that learners should be allowed to assess their own performance or achievement, other learners' achievements, their own and others' ability to work in a group and the product produced by the group. Teachers should not assume that learners will automatically know how to assess themselves or their peers. They need to be taught how to assess accurately, fairly and objectively. They have to be guided through the assessment process. Remind them to be objective and give them a set of criteria against which they can assess. The teacher should discuss their self- and peer assessments with them, moderate their assessments and make suggestions where necessary. In terms of the CAPS, these are informal assessments and are not recorded.

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4.6.2.1 Self-assessment

Self-assessment implies that learners make judgements about their own work. Learners can assess their own essays, reports, presentations, performances or projects. Self-assessment is, however, even more valuable when the evidence to be assessed is intrinsically personal in nature, such as reflective logs, diaries, action plans, and so on, where it can be argued that only the learner really knows how well the evidence meets the purposes or criteria it is designed to specify (Race, 2001).

Self-assessment is formative in nature and helps learners to gain more insight into their own activities, shortcomings and strong points. The more involved they are in assessing and recording their own performance, the more they will know how and what to improve. This will, in turn, help them to become responsible and independent learners (Cajkler & Addelman, 2000: 149). According to Siebörger and Macintosch (2004: 61), teachers should make sure that learners understand exactly what the self-assessment activity entails. If necessary, they should be asked to explain their understanding to the teacher. The teacher should give feedback to the learners after their self-assessment activity. They should discuss options for improvement.

Learners who have to assess themselves for the first time, often tend to give themselves either very high or very low marks. This will be rectified over time as self-assessment skills take time to develop. Using a clear set of criteria for self-assessment helps to make this type of assessment more realistic. Ask learners to justify why and how marks were allocated; let them moderate each other's assessments and adjust assessments until they thoroughly understand the process. Sometimes the teacher has to moderate the learners' self-assessment and make adjustments if necessary (IEB, 2005).

It is advisable to supply learners with a tool designed by the assessor, to do self-assessment (see section 4.7.2). Questions that could be included in this tool are, for example:

- What were the best points of your demonstration?
- Did anything not happen according to plan? How did this affect what you did?
- What did you learn from the demonstration?
- What would you do differently next time?

In terms of the CAPS, self-assessments are always informal assessments and are not recorded.

4.6.2.2 Peer assessment

Peer assessment entails one learner (or a group of learners) making assessment decisions about the work of another learner (or group of learners). It can be an individual performance or task, such as an essay, report, practical work or presentation, or it can be a cooperative performance or task, such as a role-play or a group project (IEB, 2005). Learners often learn more from their peers' feedback than from the teacher's. They tend to perceive comments from their peers as much less intimidating than comments from their teacher. Teachers should, however, stress the importance of positive and constructive comments, and make it clear to learners that the aim of peer assessment is to support and not to criticise each other.

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Peer assessment can involve one or more than one learner. It is usually more reliable and consistent when more than one learner assesses a fellow learner's work. Reliability is also improved if assessors are chosen randomly so that friendship factors are less likely to cloud objectivity.

Peer assessment is informal and does not necessarily involve mark allocation. Learners can be asked to assess each other's work to help them with revision. In the language classroom, learners can, for example, be asked to complete a form such as the one given in the box below about a peer's written work (Soven, 1999: 44–45). In terms of the CAPS, peer assessments are always informal assessments and are not recorded.

An example of a peer assessment tool

I think the best part of your essay is: ....
I think you could change the following: ...
I think you should add the following: ...
I do not understand: ...
You are good at: ...
..... was very effective.

4.6.2.3 Group assessment

Group assessment involves the assessment of the process as well as the product of group work. It can include self-assessment by individuals or by the group as a whole of the product they have generated, and/or their respective contributions towards the product. Group assessment therefore involves elements of both peer assessment and self-assessment (Race, 2001).

The process of group work refers to social skills, time management and group dynamics. This implies that learners' abilities to assist each other, cooperate with the rest of the group members, divide work and combine individual contributions into a single composite assessable product, may be assessed.

Learners may assess their own and other group members' contributions in a qualitative way. This can be done by letting learners use assessment rubrics such as the following:

Table 4.2 Cooperative learning group skills observation sheet

DATE: NAME:	GROUP WORK Group A ACTIVITY:				
	Myself	Allen	Bokwe	Chetty	Dimba
TASK SKILLS					
Gives ideas	3	7	3	7	3
Asks appropriate questions	3	7	3	3	7

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Stays focused	7	7	3	3	3
Follows instructions	3	7	3	3	3
Checks understanding of others	3	7	3	7	3
Gets group to stay focused	7	7	3	7	3
SOCIAL SKILLS					
Encourages others	7	3	3	7	3
Explains ideas	3	7	3	3	7
Discusses competence	3	7	3	3	3
Listens well	3	7	3	3	3
Praises others	7	3	3	7	3

Source: Adapted from Department of Education (2005: 19)

In terms of the CAPS, group assessments are always informal assessments and are not recorded.

4.6.3 Observation-based assessment

Observation-based assessments assess not only skills but also the underpinning knowledge and essential attitudes that are necessary to perform at a required standard. This type of assessment allows the teacher to collect different kinds of evidence for different learners at different times. It can be informal, in which case it is often less structured, or it can be formal and very structured in nature. Whether it is formal or informal, it usually aims at assessing learners while they are performing a practical activity or interacting with one another (Van Rooy, 2004).

4.6.3.1 Observation of classroom and group-work interaction

Assessing class participation by means of observation is a good way of rewarding learners for their contribution in an active and cooperative classroom. It encourages learners to do homework, take part in classroom activities, show enthusiasm, contribute to group work and to take responsibility for their own learning. If classroom participation is assessed, the teacher should set very clear guidelines on the way in which learners are expected to participate, what the marking criteria are and how learners will be assessed. If learner participation is assessed it is of the utmost importance that all the learners get equal opportunities to participate (University of Wollongong, n.d.). If an assessment rubric is used to observe classroom participation, learners must see the rubric beforehand.

4.6.3.2 Observation of a practical demonstration of a task or performance

There is a wide range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that can only be evaluated effectively by physically observing the learner carrying out the task, for example acting, dancing, conducting an experiment, delivering an oral presentation, or preparing food.

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Observation allows teachers to collect evidence of current competence and is very reliable, because the learner is seen performing the task. You should remember that it puts extra pressure on learners if they know that they are being assessed.

Different techniques can be used to record information for assessment purposes during the observation, for example

- compiling a written description of what the learner did, what was omitted, done correctly or incorrectly; for example, observing a learner conducting an experiment or preparing food
- using assessment tools such as checklists, score sheets and rating scales to evaluate the observed behaviour.

4.6.3.3 Observation of simulated performance

Simulation means that the actual situation, procedures and circumstances are imitated. Learners are assessed when working in the simulated situation as if they were in the real situation. Here the teacher will observe and assess the learners' performance according to predetermined criteria in a situation where conditions, problems or situations are reproduced so that they are as close to the real thing as possible. If learners can perform a task correctly in the simulated situation, it is very likely that they will also be able to perform the task correctly in a real-life or job situation.

The assessor needs to have a clear idea of what resources are required for the duration of the activities simulated, to replicate a real-life situation.

A simulation itself is not really an assessment instrument, but rather a specific context under which different assessment instruments can be used. A good example of a simulation is, of course, the flight simulator that is used during the training of pilots. In the FET band, a "restaurant evening" where Hospitality learners are expected to prepare and serve food to restaurant guests, is an example of a simulation that is often used in schools. In FET colleges, workshops are often simulated to assess learners in aspects such as construction materials. In Office Practice, a simulated office can be used to assess learners' ability to answer customer enquiries in an office setting.

We distinguish between two types of simulation in assessment:

■ REPLICAS

In this form of simulation as an assessment instrument the learner is assessed on exact replicas, or scaled-down or enlarged models of the actual facilities, equipment or materials used on the job. Replicas of human organs can, for example, be used in this type of assessment. Using a wig to assess learners' ability to set someone's hair, or a dummy to assess learners' ability to give a kiss of life or to bandage a broken arm, are also examples of replicas.

■ ROLE-PLAYS

A simulation exercise can take the form of role-plays, also called skills exercises. In a role-play, learners act out situations and behaviours that resemble real-life situations. It is an instrument for assessing practical skills, but may also be used to assess behaviour

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and attitudes, in connection with communication, conflict management and persuasion. An example of role-play in simulation exercises is a teacher letting learners conduct a meeting in their second additional language, in order to assess their oral language skills.

4.6.3.4 Guidelines for effective observations

The effectiveness of the observation can be improved by adhering to the following guidelines:

- The observation should be systematic. The entire process must be planned. You should establish exactly what needs to be assessed. Determine what behaviour will be observed, how it will be done, and how the learner's behaviour will be noted, scored and graded. Prepare the assessment tools beforehand, e.g. checklists or rubrics that you are going to use for the scoring and grading (see section 4.7.2).
- Observation has to be intentional and should be done with clear outcomes for learning in mind.
- Establish beforehand the criteria that will be used for the assessment, and discuss these with the learners before you begin.
- Observe with caution. Position yourself in a place where you can observe and hear without distracting the learner.
- If possible, observations should be used diagnostically to assess the learning experience and indicate to learners where and how they can improve. This implies that constructive feedback should be given after the observation.
- If this demonstration forms part of portfolio building, photographs should be taken or you should write complete notes.
- Take care not to be subjective while observing. You should not allow personal preferences and dislikes to influence your objectivity.

4.6.3.5 Assessment of final products

Performance assessments often involve assessing the final product against relevant criteria. It is very important that learners should know what these criteria are before they start with their product. Examples of final products are a final piece of art, an item produced on a workbench, a letter that was typed, or a website that was created.

4.6.4 Paper-based assessment

Pen and paper assessments can be in the form of tests and examinations, case studies, assignments, reports or portfolios.

4.6.4.1 Tests and examinations

Tests and examinations are very structured and allow teachers to assess all learners in the same way and at the same time.

This traditional method of assessment is used widely. The question paper should contain instructions for answering the questions, the marks assigned to each answer, the

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time limit, if any, of the assessment session, and any tables, diagrams and answer sheets that the learner may need or is allowed to use during the assessment. Learners should know exactly what criteria will be used to assess their written work.

Before deciding to make use of this assessment method, you should ask yourself whether it will test what you intend to test. Tests and examinations are useful if the content area is of a theoretical nature and you want evidence of the learners' factual knowledge or comprehension or recall skills. Written tests, however, have limited potential to assess higher level skills.

Written tests and examinations may take the form of an open-book assessment or a closed-book assessment. Closed-book assessments require the learner to rely on memory. Although the application of skills can be tested, recall plays the biggest role. An open-book assessment can be implemented to determine the learners' ability to use, compare, criticise and evaluate information contained in sources.

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING WRITTEN TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS

A few general guidelines are applicable when developing questions for written assessments:

- Before setting the questions, ask yourself what you really want to test: decision-making, problem solving, reasoning skills, critical thinking skills, data processing, strategic planning or just plain memory?
- Instructions in written assessment question papers must be clear, unambiguous and complete. Questions must also be formulated clearly because the learner will not have the opportunity to ask for clarification of the questions asked.
- Culture, gender and religious issues should be handled sensitively in your assessment instruments.
- Criteria for a written assessment should be communicated to learners, and marks and codes for levels of performance should be allocated to each of the criteria.
- A logical layout of questions is important. Make use of bullets and sub-questions, instead of bombarding learners with a number of questions in a single, but very long sentence.
- Questions should be stated in language appropriate to the subject matter and the learners. A written assessment should be fair and unbiased for learners of all language abilities.
- Give an indication of the mark allocation and time limit. The mark allocation and time limit must be realistic in terms of the amount of information that must be supplied in the answers.

4.6.4.2 Case studies

In an assessment case study, the learner is confronted with a scenario that depicts an assignment, a task or a problematic event that the learner then has to complete, perform or solve, based on the case study. The learner is required to give a solution to the problem, to submit a convincing handling strategy for the situation or to answer questions based

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on the case study. Real or simulated problems, involving people, situations or events, may be presented. The problem or event can be portrayed in a single paragraph, a few paragraphs, or can consist of hand-outs, entire files, reports, letters, accounts, receipts, memoranda and numerical data. Case studies can for example be used in Accounting and Business Studies. A case study in which the income, expenditure, profits and problems of a small retail business are described can be given to learners. They can then be asked to prepare financial statements and to prepare a presentation in which solutions for the small business owner's problems are suggested.

4.6.4.3 Assignments and research projects

Assignments and research projects entail a structured written response to a proposal or question. Learners are usually given a specific period of time in which to finish the assignment or research project. Clear guidelines for completing the documents, including the length, technical requirements, layout and format as well as the criteria that will be used to assess the assignment should accompany the assignment proposal or question. Assignments are useful in assessing competence in abstract thinking and analysis, but they can also be used if you want to assess knowledge and understanding, or the ability to interpret and evaluate ideas or to synthesise information. Research projects allow learners to identify and solve problems, conduct research and write a research report.

4.6.5 Oral assessment

This method of assessment involves stating questions verbally. Oral assessments can be informal and have the advantage of providing immediate feedback. Oral assessments can also be used on a formal basis as a means of supplementing or substituting written assessments. Verbal questions and answers are effective for learners who cannot express themselves as well in written assessments. Learners also have the opportunity of asking for clarity on certain questions during the assessment process. Oral assessments are often experienced by learners as being stressful and can negatively influence the performance of such learners. Poor speakers and introverts may not be able to express themselves properly in an oral assessment. Teachers often find it hard to allocate marks for answers and the mark allocation may be subjective if the assessor favours the learner. This can be solved partially by making use of performance criteria and a scoring rubric.

Oral assessments are used to question and probe learners systematically about their knowledge of a content area or their performance in a specific activity. Oral assessments are often used in language teaching, where learners have to present a speech or debate an issue (Van Rooy, 2004).

Oral assessments or interviews are used when

- the learners' knowledge, as well as their ability to convey this knowledge in a logical way, is tested
- learners are expected to think 'on their feet'
- a learner finds it difficult to deal with written assessment
- assessing learner attitudes before, during or after a learning experience
- the learners have to elaborate on answers

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- the learners need to explain while doing an activity (a talk-through)
- follow-up questions are necessary to ascertain comprehension.

Two types of interviews can be distinguished in assessment.

4.6.5.1 Structured interviews

A structured interview can be compared to a written test. Instead of writing, the learner has to answer a fixed set of questions verbally. Specific pre-set questions are asked, leaving little room to deviate from the set questions and desired responses.

4.6.5.2 Unstructured interviews

Unstructured interviews allow the interviewer to

- ask follow-up questions that were not necessarily planned beforehand
- probe for more information and clarification.

An unstructured interview employs a few general questions as a starting point and, depending on the learner's answers, the teacher has to probe for more information. Typical probing questions are: "Please explain that in more detail," or "Explain what you have done to ensure that this model that you have built will not chip at the edges."

These probes are done in such a way that the learner feels committed to respond with more information.

■ GUIDELINES FOR ORAL ASSESSMENTS

Oral questioning is a skill that can be acquired and practised like any other skill. Keep the following in mind when asking questions:

- Good listening skills are essential. The golden rule is to listen more, and to speak less.
- Use silence to give the learner time to think about a question.
- Think carefully before making remarks and comments. Be careful not to get into debates with the learner. Do not give your own views; get information from the learner. Do not pass judgement on what the learner has said.
- Know when to interrupt. You should only interrupt if the learner has obviously misunderstood the question or is rambling on in a confusing and irrelevant way.

4.6.6 Practical assessment tasks

In some subjects, there are compulsory practical assessment tasks that must be completed. Examples are oral assessments in languages, performances in Dance Studies and in Music, and various other practical performances in subjects such as Agricultural Management Practices, Technology, Computer Applications Technology, Consumer Studies, Hospitality Studies, Tourism, Life Orientation, Information Technology, Design and Dramatic Arts.

Because of their importance in more practically oriented subjects, practical

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assessment tasks will count 25% of the end-of-year examinations. In Grade 12, these tasks have to be moderated by experts and assured for quality by Umalusi.

4.7 RECORDING AND REPORTING LEARNER PERFORMANCE

According to the Department of Basic Education (2011b), the marks obtained in each assessment task in the formal programme of assessment must be recorded and be reflected in formal reports to parents and school management teams. Promotion of Grades 10 and 11 learners depends on these marks. In Grade 12, these marks form part of the internal school-based continuous assessment mark.

Evidence of the learner's conceptual progression must be recorded, while records of assessments should indicate if a learner is ready for progression or promotion. The assessment records may be used for the monitoring of learning and for planning future learning.

4.7.1 Teacher portfolio

The Department of Basic Education specifies the number of formal assessments that should be recorded for each grade in each subject. Each teacher should have a portfolio in which all the assessment tasks (plus memoranda) and the annual programme of assessment are included. Teacher portfolios must also contain record sheets with learners' marks for all formal assessment tasks. It might also contain informal notes on learner performance and plans to change or improve teaching and/or assessment.

4.7.2 Recording by means of assessment tools

When assessing learners, the data or evidence that you gather from the learners need to be captured so that it can be presented in an orderly, accurate and understandable way. For this purpose, one can make use of assessment tools or recording/assessment instruments. An assessment tool/instrument is the measuring device according to which information regarding the abilities and performance of a candidate is gathered and recorded, in order to judge the information against specific assessment criteria. It can be a checklist, observation sheet, a worksheet, self-assessment sheet, memorandum, assessment rubric or an assessment grid.

An assessment tool must suit the assessment task and it must be linked to specific criteria. Learners must be aware of the criteria that will be used to assess them; therefore the assessment tool must be given to them before the assessment. It should form part of the instructions of the assessment task, assignment or project.

Assessment tools can be classified as rating scales, rubrics, checklists or observation sheets.

4.7.2.1 Rating scales

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Symbols or marks are used on a rating scale. The mark or symbol is described in terms of the competencies that are required to achieve that mark or symbol. The following seven-point scale is used in FET (Department of Basic Education, 2011b):

Table 4.3 Scale of achievement used in FET

Rating code	Description of competence	Percentage
7	Outstanding achievement	80–100
6	Meritorious achievement	70–79
5	Substantial achievement	60–69
4	Adequate achievement	50–59
3	Moderate achievement	40–49
2	Elementary achievement	30–39
1	Not achieved	0–29

Source: Department of Basic Education (2011b: 6)

In the FET band, the rating scale is used as a guide, but learners' results must be recorded as marks and reported as percentages.

Rating scales can also be used by listing the criteria and then making use of a rating scale as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Rating scale for the assessment of reading aloud

Criteria	Excellent (9–10)	Good (7–8)	Average (5–6)	Poor (3–4)	Very poor (0–2)
Reads fluently					
Pronunciation correct					
Interpretative reading					
Reads audibly and clearly					
Keeps eye contact with the audience					
Effective variation of reading tempo					
Shows understanding of what is being read					
Assessed by:		Date:			
Comments:					

Source: Adapted from *Beeld* (2003: 3)

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4.7.2.2 Checklists and observation sheets

These are useful for ensuring that learners are assessed systematically and can, for example, be used for checking systematic approaches to mechanical tasks, for demonstrations, or for assessing written work. When the learner has performed a particular activity (statement or criteria) on the checklist satisfactorily, the activity is ticked off. Checklists check, for example, whether all components of a specific task are included or whether the learner has adhered to technical requirements. The activities that have been ticked off are an indication of how the learner has performed. Observation sheets usually comprise a list of criteria, providing space for comments. It is important to plan and to prepare checklists and observation sheets in advance.

Examples of an observation sheet and a checklist are shown in tables 4.5 and 4.6.

Table 4.5 Observation sheet for observing an experiment

Criteria	Yes	No	Comments
Makes detailed observations			
Looks for attributes			
Distinguishes inferences versus observations			
Measures accurately			
Uses correct measurement units			
Identifies manipulated/responding variable			
Controls variables			

Table 4.6 Checklist for assessing adherence to technical requirements of a research report or assignment

Technical requirement	✓ or ×
• Table of contents	
• Correct numbering of headings and subheadings	
• Page numbers provided	
• Correct referencing technique used	
• Bibliography included	

4.7.2.3 Rubrics or assessment grids/matrices

When performance-based assessment is done, rubrics are usually used to indicate whether learners have surpassed, achieved, partially achieved or not achieved the expected learning intentions and/or criteria. A rubric can be regarded as a scoring tool "that divides an assignment into its component parts and objectives, and provides a detailed description of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable levels of performance for each

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part" (Stevens & Levi, 2004: 3). Rubrics can be used to grade any assignment or task: research papers, book reviews, participation in discussions, laboratory work, portfolios, oral presentations, group work, and many more.

A wide variety of existing rubrics are available on the internet. It is, however, usually necessary to adapt existing checklists and rubrics or to develop new ones. This is necessary because rubrics are usually task-specific, and the criteria for each assessment task will differ. Learners should have insight into the assessment rubric that will be used to score their tasks and assignments. They should even be encouraged to score their own work by means of the rubric, before the teacher scores the work.

Although it takes some time to develop scoring rubrics, the time spent can be justified in terms of the following:

- When using rubrics, learners have a better idea of what is expected of them, because they see the rubric before the assessment.
- Using rubrics saves time, because you do not need to repeat the same comments over and over on most learners' papers.
- Rubrics ensure fair and consistent marking.
- Rubrics ensure consistency between different markers.
- It is easier to diagnose learners' strengths and shortcomings when making use of rubrics.
- Rubrics can be seen as a way of giving constructive feedback to learners.

4.7.2.4 Guidelines for developing rubrics that are made to fit a specific purpose

Although there is a wide variety of rubrics available (from the Department of Basic Education or elsewhere on the internet) the nature of a task might require you to develop your own assignment-specific rubrics. Allen (2003) provides the following guidelines for developing scoring rubrics that are made to fit a specific purpose:

- Determine what you are assessing (e.g. critical thinking).
- Determine the characteristics of what you are assessing (e.g. appropriate use of evidence, recognition of logical fallacies).
- Describe the best work you could expect using these characteristics. This describes the top category.
- Describe the worst acceptable product using these characteristics. This describes the lowest acceptable category.
- Describe what would be a completely unacceptable product. This describes the lowest category.
- You have now developed three levels of assessment. If you want to include other levels in between those, proceed by developing descriptions of intermediate-level products and assign them to intermediate categories. You might develop a scale that runs from 1 to 5 (unacceptable, marginal, acceptable, good, outstanding), from 1 to 3 (novice, competent, exemplary; or not achieved, achieved, outstanding achievement), or any other set that is meaningful.

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Table 4.7 Example of a rubric for assessing a research project on heritage sites (Geography)

Criteria	Outstanding Level 7	Meritorious Level 6	Substantial Level 5	Adequate Level 4	Moderate Level 3	Elementary Level 2	Not achieved Level 1
Understanding the concepts "heritage" and "heritage sites"	Excellent formulation of own definitions.	Independently formulates own definitions.	Able to do independent dictionary search and rewrite the definitions.	Defines the concepts "heritage" and "heritage sites".	Needs assistance to do dictionary search. Able to copy definitions.	Needs assistance in dictionary search and copying of definitions.	Unable to use dictionary. Not able to find and copy definitions.
Exploring different categories of heritage sites	Independently explores and evaluates heritage sites from a wide variety of resources.	Explores and evaluates heritage sites, using different resources.	Able to identify and classify heritage sites from different resources.	Understands the heritage sites categories.	Needs assistance to identify and classify heritage sites.	Needs assistance to identify heritage sites. Unable to do classification.	Unable to identify or classify heritage sites.
Determining the significance of a certain heritage site	Able to provide a comprehensive evaluation and explanation on the significance of a wide range of heritage sites.	Able to provide an independent explanation on the significance of a range of heritage sites.	Able to provide an explanation on the significance of heritage sites.	Understands how the significance of heritage sites is determined.	Demonstrates limited understanding of the significance of heritage sites.	Demonstrates very limited understanding of the significance of heritage sites.	No understanding of the significance of heritage sites.
Registering and managing of heritage sites	Able to give comprehensive explanation of registration and managing of heritage sites. Provides good examples of organisations responsible for the managing of heritage sites.	Able to give explanation of registration and managing of heritage sites. Provides some examples of organisations responsible for the managing of heritage sites.	Understands the registration. Able to explain which organisations are responsible for the managing of heritage sites.	Understands the registration and basic managing of a heritage site.	Demonstrates limited understanding of the registration and basic managing of a heritage site.	Demonstrates very limited understanding of the registration and basic managing of a heritage site.	No understanding of the registration and basic managing of a heritage site.
Importance of preserving heritage sites	Able to evaluate and make recommendations concerning the importance of preserving heritage sites.	Able to provide an explanation on the importance of preserving heritage sites, and makes some recommendations.	Able to provide an explanation on the importance of preserving heritage sites.	Can explain the importance of preserving heritage sites.	Gives limited explanation on the importance of preserving heritage sites.	Gives very limited explanation on the importance of preserving heritage sites.	Unable to give explanation on the importance of preserving heritage sites.
Presentation	Outstanding.	Meritorious.	Substantial.	Adequate.	Moderate.	Elementary.	Not acceptable.

Source: Department of Education (2007: 22)

- Ask colleagues who were not involved in the rubric's development to apply it to some products or behaviours, and revise as needed to eliminate ambiguities.
- Test the rubric first on some of the learners' work to see whether you need to make adjustments.

Table 4.7 shows an example of a rubric that was developed specifically for the purpose of assessing a Geography project on heritage sites.

4.7.3 Record keeping

It is very important for teachers to keep a meticulous record of all relevant assessment processes and of each learner's progress. All records of assessment should be systematically maintained in accordance with the subject assessment guidelines. Records can be kept electronically, on class lists, in books or in any other way accepted and agreed upon by the school. The records of learners' performance serve to compile term reports, and also to justify the final promotion mark a learner receives at the end of the year.

Those who are fortunate enough to use an electronic system of record keeping should try to make the most of it by capturing as much information about the learner as possible. However, if a mark book is still used, it should be organised by dividing it into different categories of information, depending on the purpose and how often each is required (Barnes & Hunt, 2003: 40). Reporting in mark books or on recording sheets should clearly indicate the subject, grade and class, learners' names, assessment dates, the title and a brief description of the assessment activity, the assessment results, and comments for improvement if necessary.

Apart from background information on the learner, Barnes and Hunt (2003: 40–41) advise that a mark book should also make provision for information to be entered for every lesson, and other information to be entered regularly. Information to be entered for every lesson includes aspects such as punctuality, remembered/forgotten equipment, homework not done, and merits/demerits. This type of information should be entered quickly and concisely. Making use of symbols, such as "L" for late or "!" for homework not done, can ease the process. This section of the mark book could also make provision for recording informal assessments of learners, and personal notes about learners' progress written by the subject teacher.

Other information to be entered regularly includes results of all formal assessments such as tests and examinations, marks for homework exercises that were assessed, projects, oral presentations, etc. In each case it should be clear

- what exactly the mark was for
- what the maximum mark for the assessment was
- what mark the learner achieved
- what the task was
- what assessment tool or recording instrument was used in the assessment.

The following information must be included in record sheets: subject, grade and class, learners' names, dates of assessment, names of the formal assessment tasks, the results of formal assessment tasks, and comments for support purposes when and where appro-

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priate. It is important that records are accurate and up to date, as this information will be used to compile a schedule and also to compile reports.

4.7.4 Schedules

A schedule is a manual or electronic consolidation of information with regard to the progress of all learners in a particular grade in a school and should be completed four times a year (Department of Basic Education, 2011a). Schedules should indicate the following: school, date, list of names and surnames of each learner in the grade, admission number, date of birth, gender, age and number of years in phase for each learner, performance of each learner in each subject, and signatures of teachers and principal and, for the end-of-year schedule, also of the departmental official.

4.7.5 Reports and report writing

Reports differ from school to school, reflecting different contexts (Barnes & Hunt, 2003: 118). There are, however, a number of requirements that any report should adhere to:

- Reports should always be presented in a professional way.
- Various readers should be able to understand reports. This requires an explanation of the codes and symbols that are used on the report.
- A report should be reasonably concise.

Report cards should have no errors, erasures or corrections. Table 4.8 shows what should be included in a report card (adapted from Barnes & Hunt, 2003: 118).

Table 4.8 Information to be included on a report card

Standard details	Grades/marks/ figures	Comments
Name of learner Name of school and school stamp Grade and class Date of birth Date/term/year School attendance profile Names of registration teacher and subject teachers Dates of closing and opening of school	Percentage/code obtained for each subject An indication of how the final promotion marks were calculated An explanatory key for the codes of the national coding system	Written comments should be given on • how the learner is progressing in relation to previous performance and the requirements of the subject • how the learner is participating in class • what the learner needs to do in order to improve (specific targets to be set) • the learner's attitude and involvement (e.g. a particularly impressive piece of work or extra involvement in activities).

Source: Adapted from Barnes & Hunt (2003: 118)

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Report cards for FET must contain percentages and should also include the following, as specified by the Department of Basic Education (2011a):

- **Personal details:** learner's name, grade and class, date of birth, school attendance profile
- **Official school details:** year and term, name of the school, date, signature and comment of parent or guardian, teacher and principal, dates of closing and opening of school, school stamp, explanation of the codes of the national coding system
- **Performance details:** a national code and/or a percentage indicating the level of performance per subject, and a description of the strengths and developmental needs of the learner
- **Constructive feedback:** the feedback should contain comments about the learner's performance in relation to his or her previous performance

4.8 THE UNIQUE NATURE OF ASSESSMENT IN FET FOR TVET (NATIONAL VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATES)

Grades 10 to 12 in schools and equivalent levels in FET for TVET make up the Further Education and Training (FET) band. National Vocational Certificates fall under FET for TVET.

FET for TVET and their teaching and learning fall under the Department of Higher Education and Training and not under the Department of Basic Education. As is the case with higher education institutions, the teaching and assessment approach at FET for TVET is outcomes-based. Learning intentions are described as outcomes and learner performance is assessed against assessment standards.

As most of what was described above (such as assessment instruments) also holds true for assessment in FET for TVET, only the differences between the FET for TVET and FET for schools regarding assessment will be discussed in this section.

According to the Department of Higher Education (2013a), the principles driving assessment in the National Certificate (Vocational) are integration, relevance, credibility, coherence, flexibility, participation, access, progression, portability, articulation, recognition of prior learning, validity, reliability, fairness, transparency, practicability and cost-effectiveness.

As the final assessment (level 4) is a very high-stakes assessment, validity (as described by Chatterji, 2013: 4–6) is of the utmost importance, as crucial decisions are made based on the level 4 results, which could influence the careers of students.

The Department of Higher Education (2013b: 5) expects FET in TVET to

- develop a policy for internal continuous assessment (ICASS)
- compile an annual ICASS assessment plan and schedule for each NC(V) subject offered by the college
- design and moderate suitable assessment tasks and tools
- conduct assessments as per the annual subject assessment plan
- conduct subject-level moderation on marked assessments for each subject, according to the assessment plan

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- monitor the conduct and moderation of ICASS to ensure that the ICASS component is being implemented
- conduct verification of evidence and marks produced for the ICASS component
- report on the implementation of the ICASS component.

The assessment framework in FET for TVET consists of the following:

- In fundamental subjects (non-vocational subjects), there is internal continuous assessment (ICASS) and an examination.
- In vocational subjects, there is internal continuous assessment (ICASS), an integrated summative assessment task (ISAT), and an examination.
- Examinations can be internal or external (depending on the subject).
- External assessment is known as external summative assessment (ESASS) and includes ISAT as a compulsory component.

Important features are that:

- ICASS marks are only valid for the year of enrolment and would count for one examination and one supplementary examination following immediately thereafter.
- The ISAT mark will be valid for three years.
- The DHET monitors and verifies the moderation of ICASS.

The types of assessment used in FET for TVET are baseline, diagnostic, formative and summative assessment (see Chapter 1, section 1.7 for a description of each). Methods of assessment applied are lecturer assessment, peer assessment, group assessment and self-assessment (refer back to section 4.6.2 of this chapter for a description of each).

The Department of Higher Education (2013a) summarises the variety of methods and instruments for collecting evidence to be used in FET for TVET in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Summary of the variety of methods and instruments for collecting evidence to be used in FET for TVET

	Observation-based (Less structured)	Task-based (Structured)	Test-based (More structured)
Assessment instruments	• Observation • Class questions • Lecturer, student, parent discussions	• Assignments or tasks • Projects • Investigations or research • Case studies • Practical exercises • Demonstrations • Role-play • Interviews	• Examinations • Class tests • Practical examinations • Oral tests • Open-book tests
Assessment tools	• Observation sheets • Lecturer's notes • Comments	• Checklists • Rating scales • Rubrics	• Marks (e.g. %) • Rating scales (1–7)

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Evidence	• Focus on individual students • Subjective evidence based on lecturer observations and impressions	Open middle: Students produce the same evidence but in different ways. Open end: Students use same process to achieve different results.	Students answer the same questions in the same way, within the same time.

Source: Department of Higher Education (2013a: 6)

4.8.1 Internal continuous assessment (ICASS)

Subject heads have to develop a subject assessment plan for their subjects which includes the assessment tasks for the year. For each task, there must be time frames and details of topics, subject outcomes and assessment standards covered (the range of topics, subject outcomes and assessment standards are prescribed in the curriculum of each subject). A subject assessment schedule based on the subject assessment plan must be provided to learners/students at the beginning of the year.

ICASS is formative in nature and gives an indication of learner progress. It can be used for reflection as well as enrichment and improvement of teaching and learning. There are seven internal assessment tasks for foundation subjects (Language, Life Orientation and Mathematics/Mathematics Literacy). For all vocational subjects, there are five internal assessment tasks.

ICASS assessment tasks can be in the form of assignments, practical tasks, tests and examinations. Together the marks make up the ICASS component (similar to a year mark at university). Each task must be moderated before implementation and must meet the following criteria (in the form of questions):

- Is it technically sound?
- Are the content (topics), subject outcomes and learning outcomes relevant, challenging (allowing room for creative answers) and integrated where possible?
- Are tasks and sub-tasks at the appropriate cognitive levels and do they range from simple to complex?
- Is there a variety of questions and are they authentic within the subject?
- Is there an alignment between length and marks of questions, and the time allocated?
- Is the language appropriate and devoid of bias?
- Is there a balance between assessment of knowledge, skills and values?
- Is there an appropriate assessment tool?

Assessment tools/instruments are very important in ensuring valid assessments, as they spell out details of the assessment such as outcomes and assessment criteria. Rubrics are especially suitable to practical assessment tasks, as detailed descriptions can be provided to alert the learner regarding the expected levels of performance. Other assessment tools that can be used are assessment grids, checklists, assessment memoranda and/or guidelines (see section 4.7.2 for more detail on these).

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Lecturers and learners have to keep assessment portfolios. The Department of Higher Education (2013b: 14–15) specifies the requirements for each of these portfolios:

Among other items, lecturers' portfolios must contain the subject and assessment guidelines, the subject assessment plan, all ICASS assessment tasks (and their assessment tools), a pre-moderation checklist for each task and tool, a post-moderation checklist for each task, record sheets with marks, and reflection with suggestions for future improvements in teaching and assessment.

Among other items, students' portfolios must contain the subject assessment schedule, a declaration of authenticity, all marked ICASS tasks, a record of results and moderation.

4.8.2 Integrated summative assessment task (ISAT)

ISAT is an extremely important aspect of the entire assessment function. It is set externally and is therefore a compulsory component of the external summative assessment (ESASS). ISAT requires integrated application of competence and is based on the cumulative learning of students for the whole year.

ISAT can be done in two ways:

- Students have to complete an assessment task which they work on progressively throughout a whole year, and it is assessed at the end of the year.
- Students are assessed on their achievement of all competencies in a single assessment at the end of the year.

4.8.3 External national examination

A national examination, which is externally set and moderated, is written at the end of each year. A supplementary examination can be written early in the following year. The required level of cognitive ability tested in these examinations at level 4 (final year) is 30% knowledge and comprehension, 50% application, 20% analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Department of Higher Education, 2013a).

4.9 CONCLUSION

The introduction of the CAPS demands that teachers review their assessment practices and assess in such a way that assessment forms an integral part of learning. Assessment should always be based on the learning intentions and the competencies to be acquired. A wide variety of methods should be considered and the method that will assess learning the best should be selected. Great care should be taken when developing assessment instruments to ensure that questions and tasks are clearly formulated and unambiguous.

Learners should know exactly what is expected of them and what criteria will be used to assess them. Meticulous recording and reporting of assessment results are important to ensure that learners, parents and other stakeholders get a true reflection of the learners' knowledge and skills. Teachers should keep in mind that assessment results in FET play a significant role in learners' futures. All assessment activities should therefore be conducted with great care.

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