

# Assessor, moderator, coach and mentor

	Page
Specific outcomes.....	64
Learning outcomes .....	64
1. What is assessment? .....	65
2. What is moderation? .....	69
3. The role of the assessor.....	69
4. The role of the moderator.....	76
5. Coaching .....	78
6. Mentoring.....	82
7. Summary .....	85





### Specific outcomes

1. Plan and prepare for assessment.
2. Prepare candidate for assessment.
3. Conduct assessment and document evidence.
4. Evaluate evidence and make assessment judgement.
5. Provide feedback to relevant parties.
6. Review assessment.

### Learning outcomes

**Upon completion of this module, the candidate assessor (moderator) should be able to:**

- Communicate the concept of assessment to learners, managers, coaches and mentors
- Establish a relationship with moderators and finalise a common approach to the assessment process with them
- Develop relationships with coaches and mentors in order to ensure co-operation and integrated assessment
- Contribute to the effective implementation of skills development by being able to identify the responsibilities and functions of major role players
- Give appropriate feedback to coaches and mentors in terms of their contributions to the development of the learners
- Use the feedback received from moderators to improve and develop the assessment process in the workplace

## 1. What is assessment?

Assessment can be defined in a number of ways, one of which captures the general approach to assessment as follows:

"The process of measuring applied competence by collecting and interpreting evidence of such competence."

To capture the essence of the elements of the process in more direct terms, assessment can be defined as:

"A process that measures whether or not a learner has achieved the intended outcome(s) when comparing their capabilities to the assessment criteria set out in the relevant unit standard(s) or qualifications."

The second definition of assessment given above highlights a number of key elements of the assessment process.

- Firstly, the assessment is a process. This means that it has a definite starting point, a definite ending point and a logical, sequential number of phases between these two limits. The success of assessment lies in the manner in which the assessor executes and controls the assessment process.
- Secondly, the definition refers to a set of measurements. Assessors need to determine the extent to which the learning process has resulted in a change in the behaviour of a learner and the level to which such changes are being sustained. To be able to measure change, the assessors must have a set of measurement tools to measure with.
- Thirdly, the definition talks about achievement by the learner. The assessor must clearly understand what the intended result of a learning intervention must be and then establish through the application of measurement whether the result has been achieved. Achievement is described by the outcomes specified in a unit standard.

### Definition



## Notes

- Fourthly, the assessment process is a comparison event. The assessor measures achievement by comparing actual results achieved with results required. The extent to which the actual results compare with the desired results will determine whether a learner has achieved the desired competence or not.
  - In the fifth instance the definition refers to performance criteria to be applied. Performance criteria are the benchmarks against which outcomes are compared, and generally reflect the desired level of competence required. It furthermore describes "best practice" levels to ensure excellent outcome achievement. The difficulty that assessors sometimes face is to decide how close the actual results achieved match the desired outcomes.
  - Lastly, the definition refers to unit standards, as mentioned in previous modules; unit standards are the cornerstones upon which determination of competence is based. Not having appropriate unit standards will make it quite difficult, if not impossible, for assessors to be able to measure competence.
- **The objectives of assessment**
- Diagnose the performance of an employee based on agreed standards.
  - Classify an employee in terms of a skills-based award.
  - Confirm employee's competency in applying knowledge, skills and attitudes.
  - State that a certain level has been attained.
  - Confirm progress in learning.
  - Recognise prior learning (RPL).
  - Identify development.



## ■ Standard-based assessment

Standard-based assessment is the process that assesses the competences and work performance of an individual against specific standards. These standards are usually national standards and are used as the benchmark for a nationally agreed performance level.

The standards make the process objective and unbiased. The standards to be performed to are agreed at the assessment planning meeting between the candidate and the assessor.

Evidence is collected and competence is judged against it.

**Assessment can further be subcategorised into three distinct categories namely:**

- **Formative assessment**
- **Integrated assessment**

This form of assessment is a process of assessing a qualification as a whole, not merely as the sum of its parts.

- **Summative assessment**

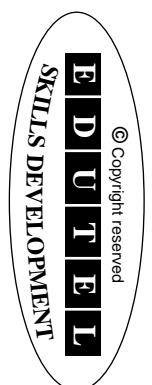
The South African Qualifications Authority guidelines for the assessment of NQF registered unit standards and qualifications refers:

### ■ Formative and summative assessment

OBET makes use of formative and summative assessments.

**Formative assessment** refers to assessment that takes place during the process of learning and teaching.

Notes



Notes



**Summative assessment** is assessment for making a judgement about achievement. This is carried out when a learner is ready to be assessed at the end of a programme of learning. Summative assessment includes workplace and instructional learning assessment.

Compare the two forms of assessment:

Formative assessment	Summative assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed to support the teaching and learning process</li> <li>• Assists in planning future learning</li> <li>• Diagnoses the learner's strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• Provides feedback to the learner on his/her progress</li> <li>• Helps to make decisions on the readiness of learners to do a summative assessment</li> <li>• Is developmental in nature</li> <li>• Credits/certificates are not awarded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the end of a learning programme (qualification, unit standard, or part qualification)</li> <li>• To determine whether the learner is competent or not yet competent</li> <li>• In knowledge and inputs-based systems, this usually occurs after a specified period of study, e.g. one year</li> <li>• In OBET, a learner's readiness determines when assessments will take place</li> <li>• Is carried out when the assessor and the learner agree that the learner is ready for assessment</li> </ul>

Results initially collected as results for formative assessment can be used for summative assessment with the agreement of the learner. This will prevent having to assess outcomes twice.

The organisation of **the learning programme will facilitate informed decisions on when summative assessments** can take place, e.g. a learning programme can be organised around one outcome or a set of outcomes, depending on what is appropriate in terms of ensuring the learner's success. Summative assessments are administered when a learner has gone through such a programme and is ready to be assessed. On declaration of competence, credit is then given, recorded and reported.



**NB**



## 2. What is moderation?

Moderation is the process of checking assessments to ensure that they have been **fair**, **valid** and **reliable**. The process ensures that assessors are all interpreting standards in the same way, and that there is consistency across time and context.

### Definition



## 3. The role of the assessor

In general terms the assessor is responsible for judging the competence of a learner in meeting the required standards.

Within the South African context, the role of an assessor is defined as:

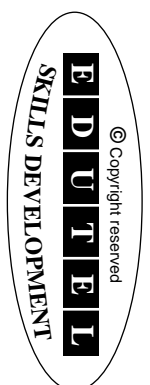
"A person who is registered by the relevant ETQA in accordance with criteria established for this purpose to measure the achievement of specified NQF standards and qualifications."

### Definition



### ■ Activities of assessors:

- Plan and prepare for assessment
  - Explaining the unit standards and assessment process to candidates (preparing candidates for assessment)
  - Helping candidates to identify their present competence in relation to the unit standards
  - Encouraging candidates to identify and gather evidence of their competence
  - Planning development and reviews with candidates



## Notes

- Assessing candidates
- Evaluating evidence
- Carrying out reviews with candidates and questioning them about assessments
- Making assessment decisions, giving positive and constructive feedback and completing any documentation (review assessment)

■ **An assessor's competences are divided into three areas, namely:**

- **Technical competence**

A subject matter expert in the contents and standards of the capabilities being assessed.

- **Assessment competence**

An expert regarding the use of standards and the assessment process. An assessor must be able to give effect to the total assessment process from the first to the last phase.

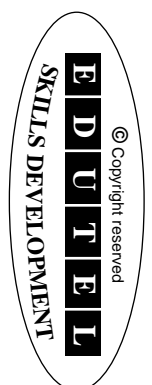
- **Communication competence**

An assessor must be able to communicate well, verbally and in writing. He/she must be able to communicate at different levels during the assessment process. The assessor must also have excellent listening and observation skills.



- **Competences to be achieved by an assessor**
- **Assess candidate's performance**
  - Prepare, agree and review assessment plans
  - Collect and judge performance evidence against criteria
  - Collect and judge knowledge evidence
  - Make assessment decision and provide feedback
  - Complete assessment records
- **Assess candidate using differing sources of evidence**
  - Judge evidence and give feedback.
  - Make decision using differing sources of evidence and give feedback.
- **The assessor's role involves the following competences:**
- **Judging the candidate's ability to:**
  - Apply acquired skills, knowledge and abilities of a variety of work activities
  - Organise priorities, manage time, keeping to deadlines, and meeting customers' expectations
  - Deal with contingencies without disrupting regular work schedules
  - Adapt to different work environments, both physical and in respect to people

Notes



## Notes

- **Plan and prepare the candidate for assessment**

The collection of information and decisions about the following issues must be completed:

- Discuss the process with the candidate before the actual assessment.
- Decide upon suitable methods of assessment to use.
- Decide which standards/competences to focus on.
- Decide upon the required evidence that the candidate must provide in order to meet the standards.
- Be familiar with relevant standards.
- Prepare the venue and required equipment to be used during the assessment process.

- **Develop and/or adapt assessment tools**

- Review the assessment tools, ensuring relevance.
- Familiarise yourself with the tools.

- **Read through the assessment standards**

- Review the standards to ensure relevance and currency.
- Review criteria.

- **Conduct the assessment**

- Gather the evidence.
- Compare the evidence to the criteria.
- Make a judgement decision regarding competence.



- **Feedback to stakeholders**

- Communicate with the candidate during the assessment process.
- Communicate with the candidate at the end of the assessment process.
- Communicate with the line manager after the assessment.

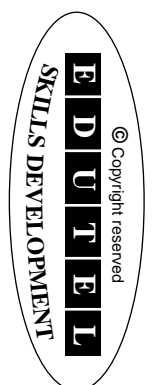
- **Record assessment data**

Document assessment-related data on the following aspects:

- The candidate, evidence, assessment process, assessment decision.

- **Review the assessment**

Notes



## Notes

The South African Qualifications Authority guidelines for the assessment of NQF registered unit standards and qualifications refers:

**Reassessment and appeals**

The assessment process has to have a built-in process for reassessment. When learners have to undergo reassessment, they have to be given feedback so that they can concentrate on areas of weaknesses. Ideally, continuous formative assessments should minimise the need for reassessment, since the assessor and the learner agree on a summative assessment only when they both feel that the learner is ready for it.

**Reassessment should comply with the following conditions:**

- Reassessment should take place in the **same situation or context** and under the same conditions.
- The **same method and assessment instrument may be used, but the task and materials should be changed.** However, they should be of the same complexity and level as for the previous assessment. Where the methods and instruments are changed, they must be appropriate for the outcomes specified.

**NOTE**

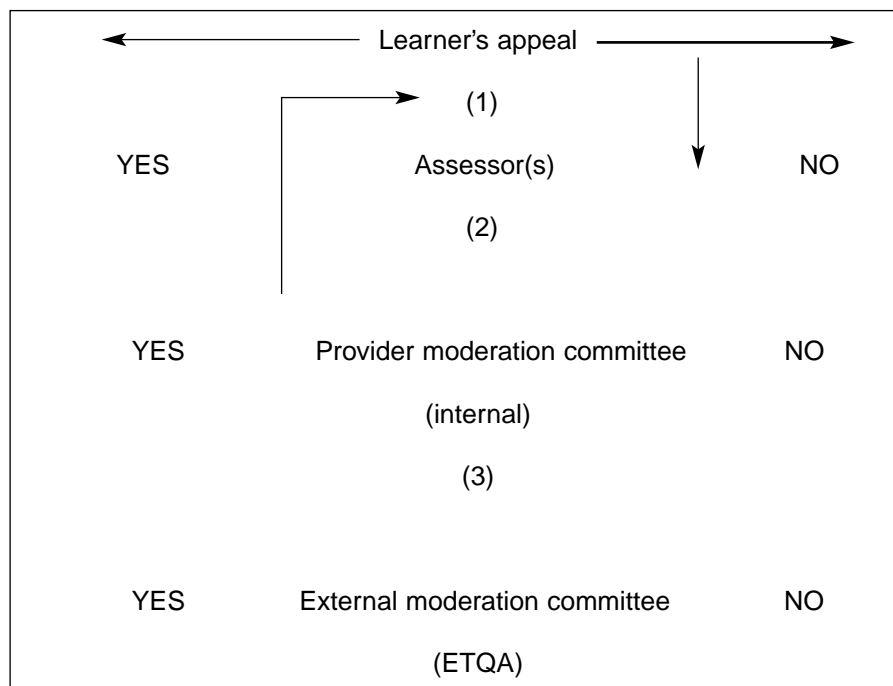
Where several outcomes have been assessed and some, but not all, were achieved successfully, a decision has to be made about the credits for the successful outcomes, i.e. will the learner be able to retain these credits without having to be reassessed? If so, what would the assessment consist of then? Care should be taken regarding **how often reassessment can be taken**, and the length of time between the original assessment and the reassessment. A learner who is repeatedly unsuccessful should be given guidance on other possible and more suitable learning avenues.

**NB**



The ETQA should ensure that there is **an appeals procedure** in place, i.e. appeals against an assessment decision. Learners should be secure in the knowledge that they can appeal against an unfair assessment.

The provider has to develop an appeals procedure in line with the requirements of the ETQA, for example:



(PLEASE NOTE: The above is an example only)

Appeals can be brought against:

- Unfair assessments
- Invalid assessments
- Unreliable assessments
- The assessor's judgement, if considered biased
- Inadequate expertise and experience of the assessor if it influenced the assessment
- Unethical practices



Notes

**Example**



#### 4. The role of the moderator

The moderator is responsible for ensuring that the principles of quality assurance are applied and maintained during the assessment of a learner's performance by assessors.

Moderators must therefore be well versed in the assessment process, thoroughly understand the principles and procedures of assessment, and be knowledgeable about the objectives of a learning intervention and the outcomes to be achieved.

An assessor must be a functional specialist in order to be able to assess competence. A moderator, on the other hand, need not be a functional specialist but must be very skilled in the application of process and quality assurance.

##### Competences to be achieved by a moderator

- Moderate the assessment process:
  - Advise and support learners
  - Maintain and monitor arrangements or processing assessment information
  - Moderate assessment practice



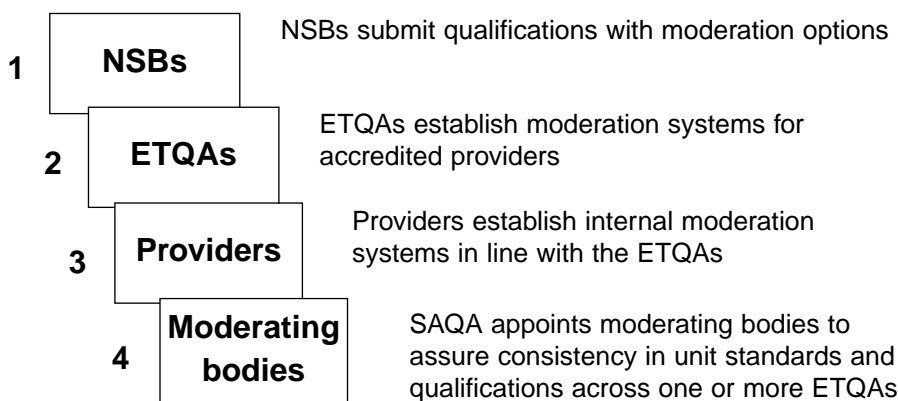
The South African Qualifications Authority guidelines for the assessment of NQF registered unit standards and qualifications refers:

■ Introduction

Moderation ensures that people who are being **assessed are assessed in a consistent, accurate and well-designed manner**. It ensures that all assessors who assess a particular unit standard or qualification are using comparable assessment methods and are making similar and consistent judgements about learners' performances.

Moderation of assessment occurs at both the level of the provider (internal moderation) and the level of the ETQA (external moderation).

The SAQA moderation system follows a layered approach, for example



NOTE

The NQF system is one in which centralised, mainly public examinations at existing levels (final examinations, as we know them) are a small part of the assessment system. A substantial amount of **assessment is developed by the provider** and individual assessors. The importance of moderating systems can





## Notes

therefore not be overemphasised. This will ensure that the system is credible and that assessors and learners behave in ethical ways.

Furthermore, moderation in the NQF is a means for professional interaction and upgrading the skills of practitioners so as to continuously improve the quality of assessment.

Therefore, the main functions of moderation systems are:

- To verify that assessments are fair, valid, reliable and practicable
- To identify the need to redesign assessments if required
- To provide an appeals procedure for dissatisfied learners
- To evaluate the performance of assessors
- To provide procedures for the deregistration of unsatisfactory assessors
- To provide feedback to the NSBs on unit standards and qualifications

## 7. Coaching

In a programme designed to develop the competence of a person as an assessor or moderator, one could quite rightly ask why such a programme should include knowledge about the role and functions of a coach and the coaching process.

It has been the experience of the author that the ability of a candidate to integrate knowledge with skill during the learning process, and integrate knowledge in a holistic manner in the



workplace is to a significant extent determined by the coach involved with the candidate, as well as the effectiveness of the coaching process.

In many instances during the assessment and feedback phases an assessor will find that liaising with the coach of a candidate can ensure that the candidate develops the required competence more effectively.

In many instances the inability of a candidate to integrate knowledge in the workplace can be traced back to poor relationships or communication problems between the learner and the coach.

The assessor inevitably then has to provide guidance and counseling, both to the learner and the coach, to ensure that the objectives of the assessment are achieved.

The purpose of this programme is not to qualify an assessor as a coach, but to provide an overview of the role and functions of a coach and sensitise the assessor to this critical role in the skills development process.

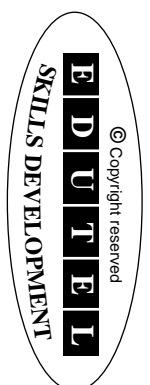
#### ■ Who is responsible for coaching?

Coaching is the responsibility of a line manager who has immediate and day-to-day accountability for a learner's performance. There is therefore a clear relationship involving status and authority, which, even if sensitively handled, is an underlying reality.

#### ■ What is the role of a coach?

The role of a coach is a broad one, combining sponsor with advisor, counselor, coach, motivator and supporter. The precise combination of these roles, and how they are used in a particular relationship, or

Notes



## Notes

in a particular programme, depends on the needs of the individual and on the organisation's requirements.

Some learners may need a counselor while others may need a role model. What is certain, is that a coach is someone who can offer support, encouragement and practical advice to the learner.

The involvement of a coach with a learner can take many forms, such as:

- Agreeing development targets
- Obtaining resources and information
- Advising on practical ways forward
- Describing an approach to problem solving
- Providing guidance and reassurance where necessary
- Unblocking thought processes
- Defining work-based projects

■ **What are the attributes of a coach?**

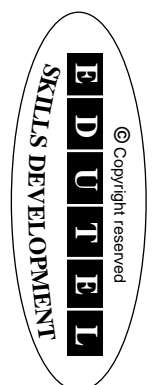
The following are important, but does not necessarily constitute an exhaustive list:

- Patience
- Sense of humour
- Assertive, but not aggressive or patronising
- Firm, but not domineering



- Knowledgeable and skilful
  - Reflective and analytical
  - Demonstrating confidence and self-belief
  - Able to manage emotions in yourself and others
  - Be a motivator and achiever
  - Be a good role model
- **How should a coach execute this responsibility?**
- By being involved in what the learner is doing. A coach must not be remote and must not sit on the fence.
  - A coach must encourage self-analysis and critical examination of the learner's work. The learner must be challenged with opposite views and real-life experiences.
  - A coach must actively seek and discuss the learner's views and opinions and temper them with his/her own views.
  - Consider openly and honestly any inhibitors to success. Create opportunities to explore some of the learner's own judgements and decisions.
  - Be prepared to describe your own work techniques, problems and solutions. Provide the learner with a balanced spread of learning opportunities.
  - Put the learner in touch with other people with relevant experience and others who are also learning.

Notes



## Notes

- Talk to other coaches and find out how they are helping their learners to achieve their goals.

### ■ The relationship between assessor and coach

Understanding the role and responsibilities of the coach in the learning process will enable the assessor to assess the learner in a manner which will further enhance the work done by the coach.

The assessor will also find it easier to communicate with the coach and even discuss views and approaches to improve a learner's competence.

The assessor, learner and coach are three very important members of the skills development team. They therefore need to understand each other's roles and responsibilities and be supportive of one another at all times.

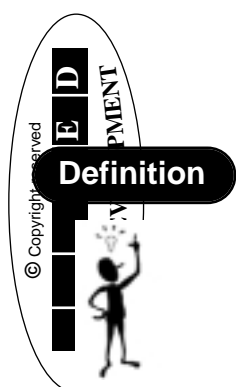
## 6. Mentoring

Despite a lot of material being available on the distinct differences between the role of coach and mentor in a learner relationship, there is still a lot of confusion amongst people as to the differences.

In many situations the role of coach and mentor are still deemed to be one and the same.

### ■ Defining mentoring

Mentoring can be defined as a deliberate, or spontaneous, pairing of a more skilled and experienced person with a lesser skilled or experienced one, with the agreed-upon goal of having the lesser skilled person grow and develop specific competences.



### ■ What does a mentor do?

A mentor may agree to perform one or more of the following functions:

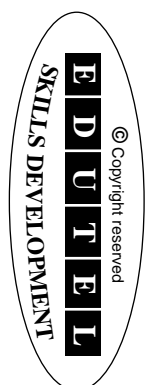
- Act as a source of information on the mission and goals of the organisation
- Provide insight into the organisation's philosophy of human resource development
- Tutor specific effective behaviour and how it functions in the organisation
- Give feedback on observed performances
- Serve as a confidant in times of personal crises and problems
- Assist the learner in plotting a career path
- Meet with the learner at agreed times to give feedback
- Agree to a no-fault conclusion of the mentorship relationship when the time is right
- Maintain the integrity of the relationship between the learner and the learner's direct manager

### ■ What are the main competences of a mentor?

In the mentoring relationship it has been found that mentors need to be competent in the following areas:

- Strong interpersonal skills
- Organisational knowledge
- Exemplary supervisory skills
- Technical competence

Notes



## Notes

- Personal power and charisma
- Status and prestige
- Willingness to be responsible for someone else's growth
- Ability to share credit
- Patience and risk taking

**■ Differences between the roles of mentor and coach**

Careful analysis of the roles and responsibilities between coach and mentor in a learner relationship should highlight the facts that:

- Coaching is inherently a line manager's responsibility, while mentoring could be a deliberate or spontaneous relationship where no line authority is present whatsoever.
- Secondly, the coach has the responsibility for developing the knowledge and skill of a learner in the direct task-related areas of the workplace, while the mentor develops the skill and knowledge of the learner in respect to the broader organisational environment.
- Thirdly, the coach accepts responsibility for the direct work-related performance of the learner. The mentor accepts responsibility for the integration of the learner into the culture and value systems of the organisation.
- The learner and coach may function in a strictly superior-subordinate relationship, while the relationship between mentor and learner is informal and not strictly bound by organisational hierarchy and protocol.



## ■ Assessor and mentor

Similar to the situation with a coach, assessors must have a good understanding of and appreciation for the role that mentors can play in a learner's development.

The mentor can have just as much influence on the skills development of a learner as the coach, albeit on another level. For the assessor it is important to recognise that the mentor is a key player in the integration of the learner's skills and knowledge in the broader organisational context.

It was previously stressed that assessment should have a holistic approach to a learner's competence assessment. Assessors may find it useful to exchange ideas and views with mentors during the assessment process, particularly if learners are not achieving holistic competence.

## 7. Summary

This module has concentrated on the different participants involved in the education, training or development of a learner. It should be quite clear to a candidate assessor that appreciation of the roles and responsibilities of the moderator, coach, mentor and the assessor is essential for successful skills development in the workplace.

The assessor should also recognise that close working relationships, regular interaction and uniformity in approach to the learning approach are vital for all the role players discussed in this module.

Lastly, assessors should realise that they will be assessing the competence development of the learner, but by doing so they are indirectly assessing the inputs and efforts of the coach and mentor. Similarly, moderators should realise that they will be evaluating the quality brought into the learning process by assessor, coach and mentor. None of the role-players identified can therefore stand apart from the process and isolate their function from the rest of the players.

Notes

