

Employer guide to
ASSESSMENT



WHY DO EMPLOYERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT **ASSESSMENT**?

Employers are involved in assessment in a variety of ways. This is because assessment — whether formal or informal — is part of employees learning the trade or business. Assessment may be incorporated into a formal course or training programme the employee is undertaking or it may be an evaluation made by a supervisor or a more experienced member of staff as to whether an employee is able to carry out a task or job.

The concepts and debates around assessment are often detailed and technical. We have produced a number of short, non-technical overviews on some of the essential aspects of assessment with lots of examples to help employers' thinking around assessment. So, whether you are new to assessment, part of a group contributing to the development of assessment approaches, or designing assessment for employees in your company, we think there will be something here to suit you.

These overviews provide information on:

- **different settings for assessment**
- **underlying principles**
- **three main elements in assessment**
- **examples of assessment methods**
- **synoptic assessment**

*Assessment is opening up greater opportunities
than ever before for employers like you.*

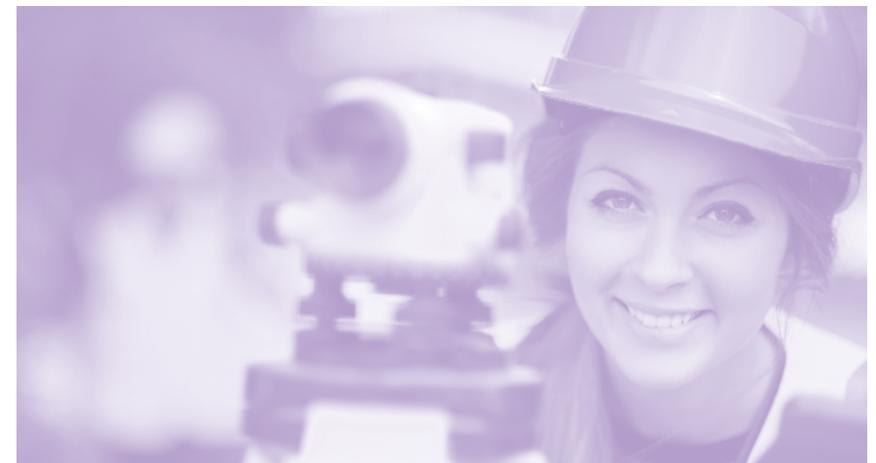
DIFFERENT SETTINGS FOR **ASSESSMENT**

Assessment that is employment related generally takes place in two main settings.

- 1. In the workplace, where assessment can be carried out using naturally occurring tasks. This tends to be for employees or apprentices.**
- 2. In an intermediary's premises such as a training provider or college where practical assessment is simulated. This tends to be for those preparing for employment, such as traineeship programmes.**

Sometimes assessment may be taken in both these settings. For example, an employee may do practical assessment through naturally occurring tasks in the workplace but may go to a college to be assessed on underpinning knowledge.

Wherever the assessment is undertaken, employers want to know whether someone can do a job or has been prepared to do a job. The following overviews will help your understanding of assessment choice and practice – especially formal assessment.



EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT IS ALWAYS UNDERPINNED AND DEVELOPED USING **FOUR KEY PRINCIPLES**

It needs to test what it is meant to test.

VALIDITY

If you want to know if a person can make something, you do not ask them to write about it. Writing about it would only indicate that they know how to make it but it would not demonstrate that they can make it.



The same test needs to generate the same range of results when used with different people over time.

RELIABILITY

The same assessment is used with different employees in the company and all are assessed using one standard.



ASSESSMENT

Assessment needs to be done within practical timescales and within the resources available.

PRACTICABILITY

An assessment to assess bricklaying skills may involve building a representative section of a wall rather than a whole wall.



The assessment must not give an advantage to, or disadvantage, any learner.

FAIRNESS

Everyone taking the assessment must have an equal chance of demonstrating competence to the standard. This means the assessment must be achievable and pitched at the right level for the competences to be demonstrated.

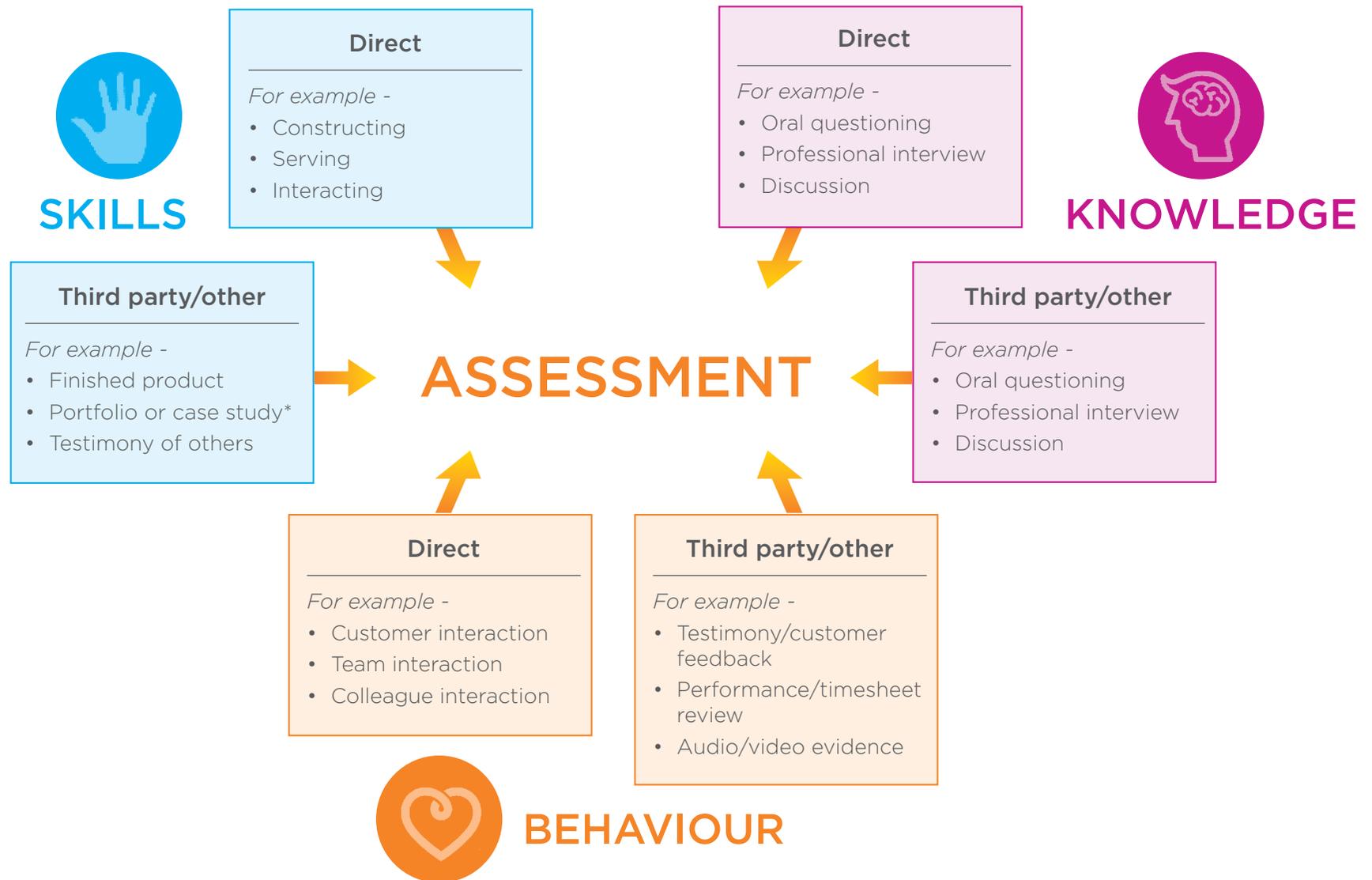


WHAT AN ASSESSMENT NEEDS TO TELL US



OBSERVATION OPTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT

A useful way of thinking about employee assessment is to decide what needs to be observed directly and what can be assessed by third-party observation or through evidence that does not require observation.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

Knowledge
Skills
Behaviour

| | Method | Knowledge | Skills | Behaviour | Use this method if you want to... | Examples |
|---|---------------------------|-----------|--------|-----------|---|---|
|  | Direct observation | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | See how a person does something Ascertain attitude and manner | Driving a forklift truck Taking calls in a call centre |
|  | Portfolio | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Products or record of work or processes A demonstration of competence over a period of time | Website design portfolio Completion log and record of different tasks, such as health & safety, record keeping, practical activities |
|  | Interview | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Establish experience and attitude Explore understanding and knowledge | Understanding of ability to work as a team Probe understanding of implementing a new process |
|  | Product | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Physical evidence of something manufactured or created Formal records required by the company/industry | Develop a widget made to a specific brief Producing a set of accounts for a department |
|  | Test | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Test recall, facts, application, reasoning Where you need to ensure a set score of performance | Exam for steps in project management A test on pharmacology (where 100% pass is required) |
|  | Case study | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Provide analysis of a scenario provided Test skills used over a period of time | How to respond to a hypothetical emergency Social care worker working with a client over a period of months |
|  | Report | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Establish skills in planning, research, analysis and synthesis Test ability to produce a substantial piece of written work | Carry out a test plan for a new product Produce an analysis of a marketing campaign |
|  | Essay | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Establish a knowledge base that underpins skills Ascertain skills in evaluation, analysis and synthesis | Health and safety implications for working in restricted areas Providing an analysis of key factors affecting child development |
|  | Audio/video | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Hear/see how a person does something Ascertain attitude and manner | Giving a presentation at a meeting Listen in to customer calls |
|  | Reflective log | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Establish a person's own practice and development See progress over time | Developing a new menu for a food outlet client Role and activities within a new team set up to develop a new product |

SYNOPTIC ASSESSMENT

What does synoptic assessment mean?

Synoptic assessment combines different elements from a programme of study or learning enabling learners to demonstrate, with breadth and depth, the combination of skills and/or knowledge and behaviours gained during their programme of learning. For each job role you need to decide what combination of skills, knowledge and behaviours you want to see.

This form of assessment would normally take place towards the end of a period of learning or near completion of a whole programme of learning. It can include a range of assessment methods to test the practical skills, knowledge and behaviours that have been developed. The assessment methods used may depend on whether learning is taking place on or off the job.

Synoptic assessment can include a range of activities such as:

- **Practical observation**
- **Professional interview/dialogue**
- **Tests**
- **Audio / video evidence**

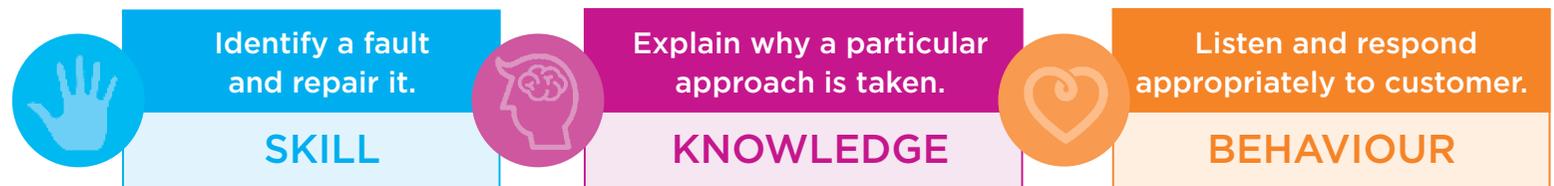
Deciding on an assessment approach for synoptic assessment

How a synoptic assessment is designed may be relevant to you if you are involved in an Apprenticeship Trailblazer (responsible for developing an assessment approach for an apprenticeship standard) or you are considering this approach as part of your company's/business training programme.

- **For each job role decide what you want to see in the synoptic assessment**
- **Decide what is essential and what is nice to have**
- **Start with identifying skills – be specific but not too detailed**
- **What knowledge elements do you want to see?**
- **What behaviours do you want a person to demonstrate?**

Remember! This is what you want the person to demonstrate over or through the synoptic assessment.

Example: *Respond to a gas boiler breakdown*



FURTHER ADVICE AND **GUIDANCE**

If SQA can assist you in exploring this guidance further, provide independent services directly, or build capacity in assessment contact the SQA team.



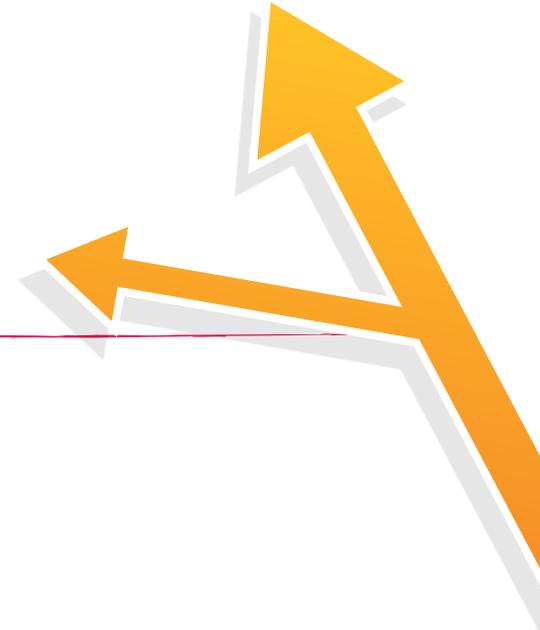
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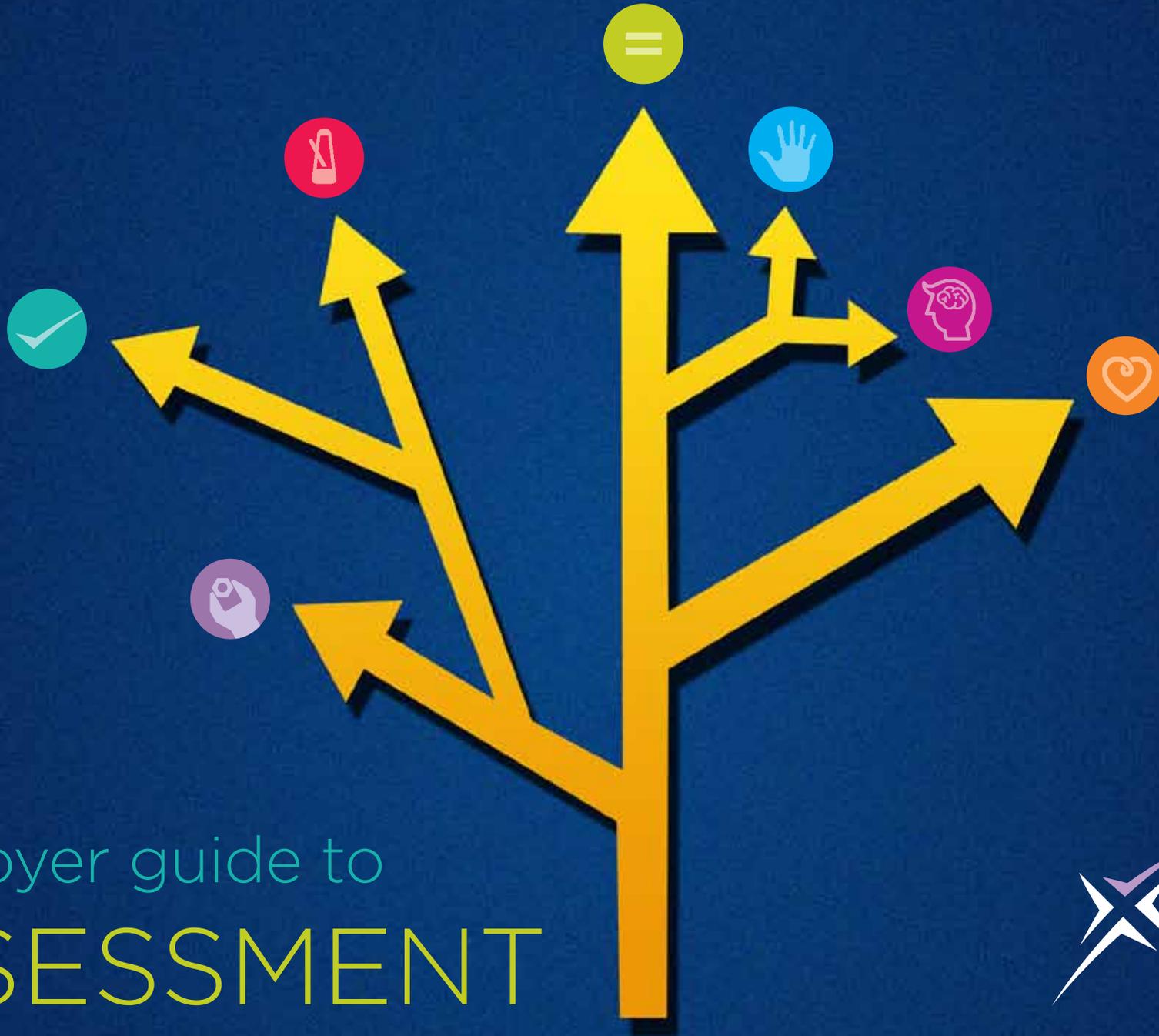


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