



Verifier Handbook

Third Edition



Primary ITO

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Introduction

As a verifier you play a key role in the Primary ITO assessment processes.

We value the knowledge you bring as part of the assessment, and the support you provide to both the learner and assessor.

On behalf of Primary ITO, thank you for your efforts, we couldn't do it without you.

Quality Assurance Team

Literacy and Numeracy Support

If you, or your learners, would like literacy and numeracy support or advice please contact the Primary ITO Literacy and Numeracy Team: literacy.numeracy@primaryito.ac.nz

The Differences between a Verifier and an Assessor

Verifiers

Verifiers are usually a supervisor, team lead, manager, or a person with sound knowledge of the assessment topic.

Verifiers are used because of their subject matter knowledge and their frequent on-job access to a learner.

The main job of a verifier is to decide if the learner is completing practical tasks to the required standard.

Assessors and verifiers work together to plan how the assessment process will work (who, what, where, when, how), and to ensure the verifier understands the quality, type and the amount of evidence learners need to collect, and how to set out their comments for the assessor.

Verifier experience in the tasks being assessed confirms for the assessor that a learner has transferred learning into workplace best-practice. This involves verifiers observing and questioning whilst the learner performs activities/tasks and giving feedback on the performance being witnessed.

Verifiers guide and assist learners in their collection of evidence, and therefore play a key role in supporting learners to achieve their qualification.

Assessors

Need to gain registration with Primary ITO.

Are expected to have a minimum level of professional assessor training (Unit Standard 4098) for workplace and contracted Provider assessors.

Have their professional practice regularly reviewed (moderated) by our Quality Assurance team.

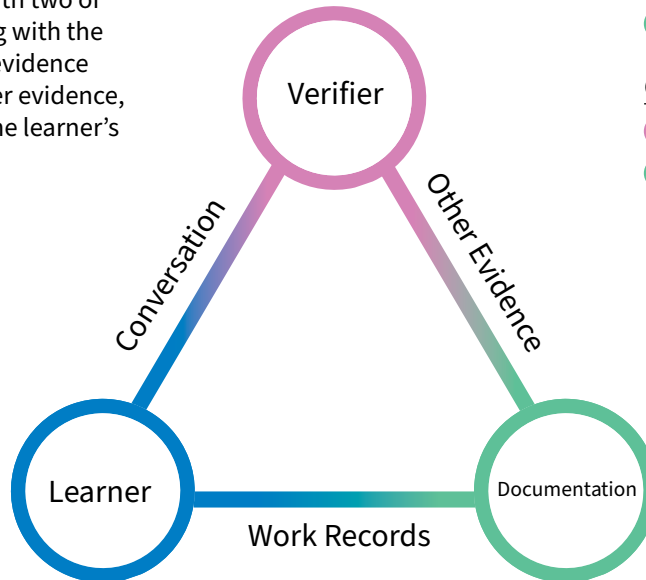
Are expected to participate in ongoing professional development workshops offered by Primary ITO.

Are required to make the final decision regarding competency.

Have the authority to register the assessment results with Primary ITO, who report those to NZQA.

Triangular Method

As an assessor, to be comfortable with making assessor decisions/professional judgements you need several points of validation. The use of the triangular method provides you with two or more sources of validation. Conversing with the learner and the verifier, looking at all evidence supplied; either work records or further evidence, will allow you to make a decision on the learner's competence.



Conversation

○ Learner

○ Verifier

Documentation

○ Work records

Other Evidence

○ Observation

○ Further Verification

Roles and Responsibilities for Verifier & Assessor

Verifier	Assessor	Both
Be competent in their own practice.	Know about the unit standard requirements and how to assess them.	Have an understanding of the industry standard.
Be in a position to capture naturally occurring evidence.	Oversee the assessment process.	Know the organisation's policies and procedures.
Be able to authenticate evidence.	Responsible for the quality of assessment.	Ensure learner knows when assessment and verification is happening.
Understand the evidence requirements and the standard required.	Final sign-off of competency.	Plan with the learner when verification/assessment is going to occur.
Provide feedback and support to the assessor and learner.	Provide feedback and support to verifiers and the learner.	Excellent communications skills.
Should know the learner.	Register credits.	Accurate and thorough documentation.
Liaise with assessor.	Liaise with verifier.	

It is unlikely that an assessor would dispute the judgment of a verifier. However, the assessor does have the final say on the assessment outcome and should ask for more evidence if their judgment differs from that of a verifier. Any decisions made which involve a judgment difference between verifier and assessor should be fully recorded in the assessment by the assessor.

Effective Verifiers

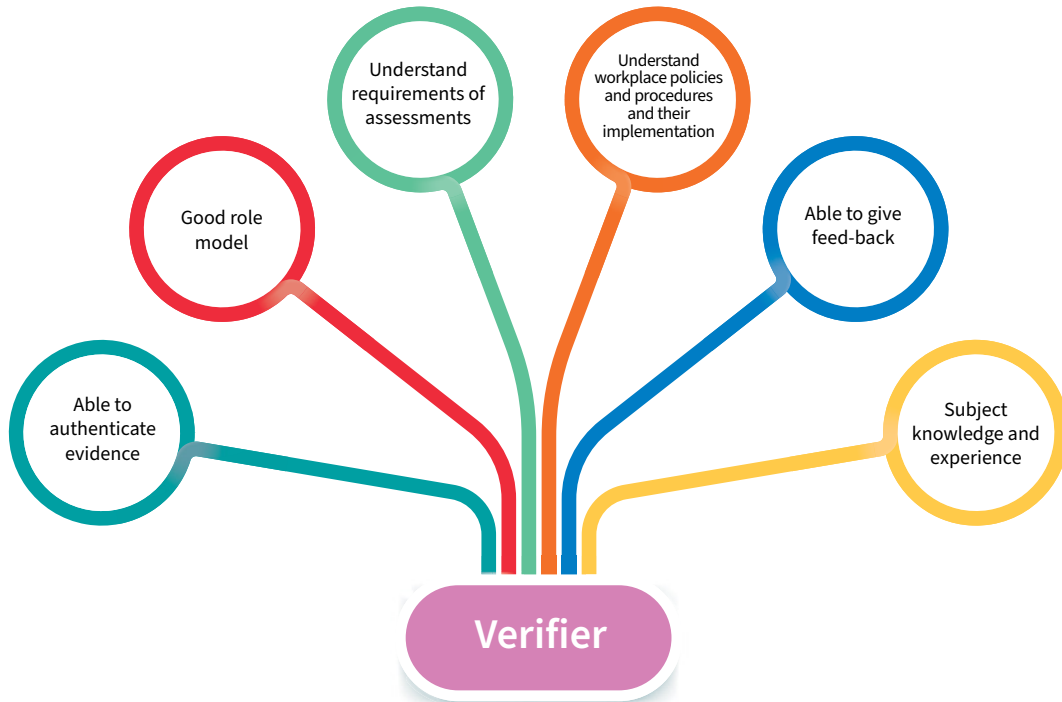
A learner may have more than one verifier throughout their qualification as they work with different managers, team leaders and supervisors. What needs to be in common for all those verifiers is that they have expertise in the topic being assessed - being a mate or buddy of the learner in itself does not make for an effective verifier (a verifier may coincidentally also be the assessor - it will depend on the structure of the workplace).

Verifiers capture what is evident in normal working life, so it is best if the verifier is someone who works with the learner on a regular basis (they do not necessarily need to be the same person who carries out training).

The majority of the verifier on-job role is taken up with commenting in writing, signing and dating tasks - possibly quite regularly if the learner is making rapid progress - so it is important that a verifier has the time available during their work schedule to perform those duties for all the learners they are involved with.



Qualities of a Verifier



Primary ITO Approach to Verification

Not all industry sectors require verification in the same way or to the same extent. For example the horticulture and primary services industries use the verification model where activities are verified as they are completed. When all activities within the assessment are completed, it is then that the verifier is required to comment on the overall performance of the learner.

However, all Primary ITO assessments have an associated Assessor / Verifier Guide that sets out the assessment tasks and the expected evidence of competency, which the Verifier needs to consider in relation to the workplace possibilities for evidence.

Often a verification will be based on observation of practical work, but it may also arise from what the learner describes in writing, or in an answer to questions about a task.

Some earlier editions of assessment did require verification of theory questions. This is now being phased out as verification is not required for written answers.

Normally there are progressive verifications related to specific learner tasks. Note in the example below the word ‘competently’. If you encounter that, competency is something you as an experienced person must make a judgment around based on whatever the assessment task prescribes, plus what your sector / organisation defines as competent work in standard practice expectations, operating procedures, etc.

Verifier declaration - Activity 10	
The Learner demonstrated that they are able to competently help with rearing calves.	Verifier signature:
	Date:

NOTE: Progressive verifications are best completed whilst the learner’s performance is fresh in your mind so you can comment with accurate and specific detail. Writing comments at a distance from the task completion leads to generalities, which are not informative for the learner or assessor.

The Value of Verifier Comments

Primary ITO expects verifiers to write comments where required, and date and sign those. The comments provide written feedback to the assessor on the notable aspects of the learner's performance that were observed.

In the comments you are explaining why you know the learner is competent. General Verifier comments such as 'Good' or 'Completed' do not provide enough detail. Take a look at the example on the right of an end of assessment comment, where a verifier has thoroughly summed up the competency of the learner. The verifier in this case took the opportunity to explain the really good performance aspects and provide some encouraging feedback to the learner.

Verifier to record

Activity 1: I have observed the Learner's work performance, and confirm that they can select and plant plants, and apply mulches in landscape work.

Comments must be provided. Please reference any attached evidence and comment on:

- The Learner's overall performance
- Specific examples of what you observed and/or evidence you sighted.

Example of verifier comments.....

William ensured that he checked for underground services before planting and used PPE correctly during his task. The selection and suitability of plants was appropriate for the area selected as seen in the attached photos. Mulching was applied where required and sound planting techniques, such as placement, staking and watering.

William always observes safety requirements while working with machinery and ensures equipment is cleaned and stored appropriately after the work is done.

Verifier to record	
Please confirm the Learner has met workplace requirements and has successfully completed the following for two different types of plants.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Selected plants for planting suitable for the site.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepared the planting area according to plant requirements and plant plants to allow for optimum growth.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Applied mulches according to plant requirements.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wore appropriate PPE for the task.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Worked safely around other people and machinery on site.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cleaned and stored tools and equipment after use.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Completed tables to show what they did.	
Evidence provided and checked:	
<input type="checkbox"/> One photo of the Learner planting the plants.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Either one photo of the completed planting showing two plants, including the mulched area, or two separate photos of each completed planting, including the mulched area.	
<input type="checkbox"/> One photo or copy of documents showing that the work was carried out safely.	
Verifier name: Justin Hammer	
Verifier signature: xxxx	Date: 18/02/2026

NOTE: Verifying third-hand – using anecdotal feedback from a co-worker – can be unreliable and unfair to the learner. This is because it is often difficult to fully capture verbally the detail of all performance aspects unless specifications are being used as a basis for reporting. eg. where a Machine Start-up Standard Operating Procedure is being used. In those cases, the verifier should make a note of the third party details.

For example: “Team leader for the gang closely checked learner’s work cutting last season’s canes on 10 rows of grapes.”

Your signature is taken as confirmation that you are fully confident the learner is skilled in the task.

When a Learner is Ready for Verification

Learners firstly need enough time to be trained, to practice, to experiment, make mistakes, get feedback and improve. They should not feel that their every working moment is being considered for verification purposes whilst they are still learning.

When an assessment task can consistently be repeated to the required level of competency, that is the time to formally verify the learner's skill or knowledge acquisition. Confirm with the learner that you feel they are ready to be verified and then record their performance in the assessment.

By progressively using assessment parts as ongoing evidence you are allowing more time for training and practice in the upcoming assessment aspects, plus the learner is further encouraged by knowing that what they are achieving day to day on-job is being written and recognised.

The Learner is not Ready for You to Verify if they:

- haven't had a chance to study and/or been fully trained.
- haven't practised to the point of where they can complete the task(s) on their own without guidance.
- haven't had feedback on their performance or a chance to ask questions.
- are being verified in a situation they have not experienced before – for example, training how to drench sheep and verifying based on drenching deer.
- cannot meet all the Primary ITO assessment task conditions.
- feel, for whatever reason, they are not yet ready.

NOTE: When you are observing the learner's skill and knowledge you should not have to coach / direct them as they complete a task. If they do require direction that means they are still in training and are not yet ready to be verified.

Authentic Evidence

As a verifier you should be looking for authentic evidence. Authentic evidence arises from the learner being assessed and not from another person. Unless the assessment actually states a task is to be done collaboratively, the learner should not be receiving assistance or aid from another, for example a co-worker helping a learner achieve their required tally or giving guidance whilst they are being verified.



Is ‘Near Enough’ good enough for Verification?

The Primary ITO assessment sets out the tasks that require verification. Those tasks need to be carried out in the context of workplace operating procedures, quality requirements, health and safety legislation, and workplace performance expectations (for example in terms of time, numbers, documentation and completion).

It is important that the learner’s task completion fully meets all of the above expectations.

If for any reason a learner cannot meet all of the task requirements, make a clear note of that in your comments, state why that is, and then draw it to the assessor’s attention for discussion.

Stopping verification

Stop the verification (and learner if needed) if:

- you can see the learner or others are in an unsafe situation.
- it is quite obvious the learner is unable to demonstrate competence in what the assessment task requires.
- factors that the learner cannot control impact on their performance – for example a workmate contributing on what is meant to be a task completed by one person, or someone or something distracting them.

In those circumstances, you should use the following process: Feedback – Re-coach – Control the verification environment – Re-verify.

Always check

Is what you see typical of the learner’s work?

Are you sure they could repeat it in the same situation and get the same results?

In team settings or group work, are you confident you have been able to identify just the learner’s contribution?

Did the learner complete the task without any coaching or guidance?

Telling A Learner Their Skills And Knowledge Are Not Ready To Be Verified

In many circumstances learners know when their performance isn't up to scratch, so it's useful to ask the learner their thoughts about their performance after the task is completed.

Be honest in your feedback to a learner and focus on explaining the assessment / workplace expectation of their performance: "If you do it that way it is not safe, not effective in terms of; too slow, too fast, not how we expect the task to be done on this farm, orchard, vineyard, packhouse, plant, vessel, etc."

Re-train/coach on what the expectation is and remind them they can be re-verified after more practice.

Helping The Learner Collect Evidence

As well as observing a learner in action, checking their finished work, talking with them and so on, the learner may be asked as part of their assessment to supply evidence in the form of photographs, video, copies of workplace documentation, feedback forms, etc.

Prompt and support them to gather that evidence (which can be as simple as offering to taking a photograph of them in action and their finished work).

There may be opportunities for evidence that are not mentioned in the assessment. If so, be proactive and guide the learner to take that and present it to their assessor.

The Primary ITO Quality Team

Quality Assurance is a specialist Primary ITO team who monitor and evaluate assessment documentation and assessor decisions to ensure that standards are applied validly and consistently to all learners. This work is a requirement of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

To do that, the team regularly samples assessments across all sectors and undertakes a detailed independent check of the learner, verifier and assessor's work within those assessments (this process is called moderation).

Their work confirms sound practice, but can also bring about changes to assessment wordings and assessor (and sometimes verifier's) practice where needed, so that Primary ITO aligns with national expectations.

Further Verifier Information

Your Primary ITO Training Adviser can support you with verification.

Please contact them if you have queries about the verification role or tasks.

Take a look at the Primary ITO website: <https://www.primaryito.ac.nz/employers/verifiers>. Watch the videos on *Skill of Verification* and *Completing assessment verification records*.

Contacts

If you have any questions or queries to do with assessment, please contact your Training Adviser or Sector Manager for assistance.

Call 0800 20 80 20

For up to date information about moderation and assessment please visit the 'Assessors' page under 'Employers' on our website @ www.primaryito.ac.nz

If you've changed your employer or are no longer assessing, please notify us @ quality@primaryito.ac.nz so we can update our database.

