

Core Skills Profile for Adults

Information Pack



Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Assessment Tools for the VET Sector

About ACER

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation recognised globally for educational research and assessment.

ACER works with Universities, TAFEs, RTOs, Schools, industry and government to deliver research initiatives, evidence-based assessment and learning solutions, including literacy, numeracy and digital literacy testing, professional learning, and evaluation services.

About the Core Skills Profile for Adults (CSPA)

The CSPA is a suite of secure online assessments that measure language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy (LLND) skills. It is primarily used as a pre-training assessment tool in vocational education and training (VET) to identify learners' strengths and development needs.

Assessments are mapped to the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) and the Digital Literacy Skills Framework (DLSF), and provide reliable data to support learning plans, course suitability, and compliance with VET Student Loan requirements. CSPA includes Reading, Numeracy, Writing, Digital Literacy, Snapshot Reading & Numeracy Indicator (SRNI), and a Practice Test.



Reading



Writing





Numeracy Digital Literacy

Snapshot Reading & Numeracy Indicator (SRNI)

CSPA components

Reading – Measures comprehension using real-world texts in workplace, education, and personal contexts, providing diagnostic feedback at the ACSF indicator level. Questions are presented to students in a split screen format, which displays the text on one side, and the questions in a separate area opposite. Candidates can scroll through longer texts and still retain sight of the question they need to answer because the question area remains fixed.

Writing – Two short online writing tasks scored using ACER's Intellimetric® automated essay technology, providing instant diagnostic feedback. After candidates type their responses directly into the CSPA assessment platform advanced analysis techniques provide instant feedback outlining writing strengths and weaknesses.

Numeracy – Assesses understanding across Number and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics and Probability. Feedback links directly to ACSF indicators. Questions are set in a range of situations relevant to adult learners, focused on workplace and employment, education and training, and personal and community contexts.

Digital Literacy – The Digital Literacy component is a static assessment which consists of 20 questions designed to assess the candidate's digital skills across a broad range of digital contexts. The questions reflect contemporary use of digital skills in a variety of contexts across three domains: personal and community, workplace and employment, education and training.

Questions are provided as multiple choice, true and false, matching phrases and images, aligning a sequence of tasks, and using drop down menus. The Individual candidate report indicates the estimated exit level and the level the candidate is working at aligned to the Digital Literacy Skills Framework (DLSF) Pre-Level 1 to Level 3.

Snapshot Reading & Numeracy Indicator (SRNI) – A 15-to-20-minute screener that identifies learners at risk of low LLN skills (below ACSF Exit Level 2) and flags those needing full CSPA assessment. The SRNI is not approved for VET Student Loans LLN entry requirements.

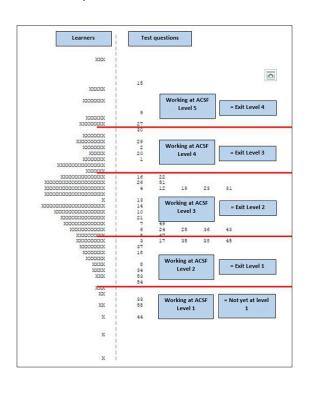
Practice assessment – A short introductory test to familiarise learners with the online platform.

Test development and quality assurance

ACER follows a rigorous development process involving field trials with VET learners, psychometric validation, and empirical mapping to ACSF and DLSF levels. This ensures CSPA assessments are fair, valid, and reliable.

Mapping to frameworks

CSPA assessments are empirically mapped to both ACSF and DLSF levels, allowing educators to identify learners' exact working and exit levels. Psychometric data ensures precise alignment and confidence in skill-level interpretation.



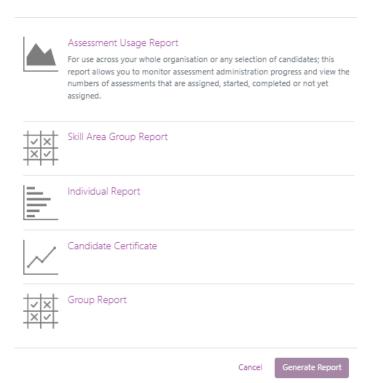
Why use the CSPA?

- Nationally approved for use under the VET Student Loans scheme.
- Adaptive and efficient automatically adjusts question difficulty to the learner's level.
- Valid and reliable mapped against ACSF and DLSF through psychometric and expert review.
- Comprehensive reporting supports learner diagnostics, planning, and compliance evidence.
- Powerful, efficient administration.
- Inclusive online format is less intimidating, accessible, and instant in reporting.

Easy administration, powerful outcomes

CSPA assessment tools are delivered through the Online Assessment and Reporting Platform (OARS) providing seamless solutions for smarter administration. Candidates are invited to register via email and complete their assigned assessments. This can be done individually or in bulk. Administrators access several report generation options allowing efficient reporting to selection staff, education departments and student learning support.

Reporting options include:



CSPA reporting

CSPA provides a range of learner and group-level reports via the secure Online Assessment and Reporting System (OARS). When a learner completes an assessment a range of reports are available which can be accessed by administrators to develop individual learning plans, use the information to identify if targeted LLND support is required, and decide on suitable pathways and potential VET qualifications for candidates.

CSPA individual candidate report for professionals

A two to three-page PDF report that shows which questions the candidate responded to correctly and those that were incorrect. It includes the scale score achieved by the candidate, which correlates with the ACSF Working At/Exit Level they have obtained.







CSPA individual candidate certificates

The Learner Certificates have been created with specific, contextualised feedback on performance against each skill area. These are suitable to provide to candidates and may provide currency value for their development portfolio. Each Certificate will feature the ACSF Level estimate - Working At and Exit levels.



CSPA skill area specific group reports

The CSPA Group Report shows one row in the spreadsheet for each individual candidate that has sat at least one assessment component. From left to right the columns begin with details of the candidate's demographic field responses, followed by a section for each assessment undertaken. Within each section there will be details on the number of questions attempted, scale score, ACSF Working At and ACSF Exit Level. Details of exact start and completed times for each assessment component of the CSPA for candidates is also logged as is the date of when the Candidate Certificates were released.

Skill area specific group report (Reading)

Exported on 24/10/2025

Exported on 2	.,,																	_						_							_			$\overline{}$	_	$\overline{}$	$\overline{}$	_		$\overline{}$	$\overline{}$	$\overline{}$	$\overline{}$	\neg
									Screener									Reading B													Reading C													
			ACSF	ACSF	Part			Total					П	Т	Т			П		П	Т			П		П	П	П		П	П	Т		Т	П	П	П		Т	\top	Т	\Box	П	
			Level	Level	Two	Raw	Scale	Sitting				ΙI	- 1					ΙI	- 1						H			- 1								. 1								
Name	Username	Sitting Date	Working	Exit	Form	Score	Score	Time	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58 59	510	B1	B2	B3	B4 I	B5 E	6 B7	B8	В9	B10	B11	B12	313 E	14 B	15 C	1 C	2 C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8 (C9 C	10 C1	1 C17	2 C13	C14	C15
Candiate 1	abcd 123	22/10/2025	4	3	С	18	136	00:15:28	\checkmark	√	√	>	1	✓	√ .	1 1	×															/ ×	1	1	✓	1	1	x	×,	1 1	1	×	×	×
Candiate 2	abcd 124	22/10/2025	4	3	В	21	122	00:15:36	✓	√	✓	√	✓	√	× ·	√ ×	1	✓	√	✓	✓	✓ .	1 1	1	✓	✓	√	×	√	х,	/							\top	Т	\top	Т			
Candiate 3	abcd 125	22/10/2025	5	4	С	21	146	01:15:46	✓	√	V	>	√	√	√ .	√ ×	1				\Box											/ ×	√	1	✓	1	√	×	✓ .	1 1	1	1	×	✓
Candiate 4	abcd 126	22/10/2025	2	1	В	11	93	00:04:57	✓	×	✓	√	√	×	√	××	1	✓	√	✓	×	× :	× √	×	×	×	×	×	√	× :	×													
Candiate 5	abcd 127	22/10/2025	4	3	В	23	132	00:26:56	✓	√	✓	>	√	√	√	× √	×	✓	✓	√	√	√ ,	/ /	√	√	✓	✓	✓	√	√ ,	/							\Box		\top				
Candiate 6	abcd 128	22/10/2025	5	4	С	23	156	00:14:08	\checkmark	✓	✓	>	✓	✓	√ .	1 1	1				\perp											/ 1	√	1	✓	1	1	× ·	√ ·	1 1	1	√	1	×
Candiate 7	abcd 129	22/10/2025	5	4	С	22	150	00:34:20	✓	✓	✓	V	✓	✓	✓ .	1 1	×														-	/ /	1	1	×	1	1	1	1 .	11	1	×	1	1
Candiate 8	abcd 130	22/10/2025	3	2	В	15	104	00:25:23	^	√	^	×	✓	√	×	× √	×	×	✓	✓	✓	√ :	x x	1	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓ ,	/									\top	\top			
Candiate 9	abcd 131	22/10/2025	5	4	С	20	142	00:19:37	✓	√	V	V	✓	√	√ .	1 1	×														,	×	1	1	✓	✓	√	1	√ :	× 🗸	1	×	×	✓
Candiate 10	abcd 132	22/10/2025	4	3	В	23	132	00:30:26	\checkmark	×	1	√	✓	√	√ .	√ ×	1	✓	1	✓	√	√ ·	1 1	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ ,	1									\top	\top			
Candiate 11	abcd 133	22/10/2025	5	4	С	19	139	00:30:50	\checkmark	√	V	\	✓	√	√ .	1 1	×														,	/ 1	1	1	✓	✓	√	×	√ ·	1 1	×	×	×	×
Candiate 12	abcd 134	22/10/2025	4	3	В	21	122	00:29:58	✓	√	V	√	✓	√	√	× √	×	\checkmark	√	✓	√	✓ ,	/ ×	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓ ,	/									\perp	\perp			
Candiate 13	abcd 135	22/10/2025	5	4	С	24	164	00:19:51	1	√	1	1	✓	✓	1	1 1	1				\perp							I			,	1	1	1	✓	1	1	×	V .	1 1	1	√	1	✓
Candiate 14	abcd 136	22/10/2025	3	2	В	16	106	00:25:36	✓	√	1	1	1	1	×	x √	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	1 .	1 1	×	×	✓	×	×	×	√ :	×	Т			П		П		Т			П	П	

This report also indicates which adaptive form the learner was directed into after the 10 screener questions. In the sample above all candidates were directed into Reading form B and Reading form C.

CSPA question metadata report:

The CSPA Group Question Performance report and the associated Question Metadata report enables LLN teachers and trainers to access data for a particular group of learners. It summarises the overall group performance on each individual question in the assessments they undertook. These can be used to identify if there are common questions or groups of questions that candidates had challenges with, hence being able to target instruction in a more structured way. The Group Question Performance report also provides the ability to get immediate access to see the questions themselves (via a pop up) so the teacher/trainer can see the actual question and identify any common misunderstandings.

Summary

The CSPA offers a comprehensive, validated and flexible approach to assessing core skills for adults. Designed and maintained by ACER, it provides reliable evidence for both compliance and learner support in the VET sector. With the suite of assessments covering Writing, Reading, Numeracy, and Digital Literacy, all with enhanced reporting, CSPA continues to meet the evolving needs of training providers and learners in Australia's changing education and employment landscape.

Key features

- Individual Candidate Report
- Learner Certificates
- Group Reports
- Diagnostic Reports
- Efficient administration through OARS

OARS user licence options

A variety of options are available to cater for low to very high volumes of candidate assessments commencing at 75 through to 15,000 annually. Licence types include three at standard level progressing through to Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum.

For more information or to book a demonstration please contact the CSPA Team









cspa@acer.org

