Disability Maintenance Instrument Guidelines

Version 6.3

Effective from 1 July 2015

Contents

Aim

This set of Guidelines for the Disability Maintenance Instrument (DMI)[1] aims to provide a consistent approach to, and interpretation of, the requirements set out in the Disability Employment Assistance Funding Agreement for Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs). ADEs are required to complete DMI Assessments in accordance with these Guidelines, as described in the Operational Guidelines – Disability Employment Assistance.

Other documentation will continue to be useful for referencing but, where clarity is required, the Guidelines form the current directive. Other documents that are useful include:

1. Disability Maintenance Instrument: Frequently Asked Questions
2. Evidence Guide for Business Services.

These documents can be located on the following website:
http://resources.fahcsia.gov.au/ConsumerTrainingSupportProducts/default.htm

Introduction to the Guidelines

In completing the DMI Assessment for each Supported Employee, each ADE must meet the requirements specified in these Guidelines. In particular, each of the following items must be addressed, and all processes must be consistent with the requirements of:

- The key policy statements
- The rules for finalising the DMI Assessment
- The principles for compiling evidence
- The steps for conducting a DMI Assessment

Each of these is described in Part A, Section 1 of these Guidelines. Part B, Section 2 provides more information about the DMI, how it works and its application to policy, rules, principles and steps. Part B, Section 3 provides two case studies, and how they meet the requirements set out in these Guidelines.

The DMI involves an assessment process preceded by an evidence compilation process.

The Disability Maintenance Instrument

The DMI assesses the work-related support needs of a Supported Employee, which you are required to provide or purchase, and matches this with an appropriate level of funding. The DMI process ensures that funding is distributed on an equitable basis to ADEs.

The DMI is designed to capture disability-related employment support needs only, which includes:

- assessments

- preparation of Employment Assistance Plans

- training (social skills training, work readiness training, work preparation training, on-the-job training and other training)

- supervision and other one-on-one support

- interpreter assistance for interviews and/or work orientation

- counselling

- case management

- physical assistance and personal care

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[1] Unless otherwise specified the word DMI is used for a DMI Assessment and a DMI Reassessment.

Support includes face-to-face contact with the Supported Employee and contact by phone or email; support for career progression and transition and support provided to the Supported Employee by other service providers funded by your ADE.

The DMI does not, and is not intended to assess a Supported Employee's general level of disability or health status or their capacity to participate in work. As such the DMI does not assess what an individual can and cannot do at work or in other parts of their life. Rather, the DMI assesses how much support a Supported Employee needs to enable them to work at your ADE.

DMIs are Completed and Authorised online using the FaHCSIA Online Funding Management System (FOFMS). The DMI process is not finalised until the Assessment has been Authorised on FOFMS. The final DMI score translates into one of four funding levels and the corresponding funding is provided to your ADE to pay for the support that the Supported Employee requires to maintain their employment. Level 1 is the lowest funding level and Level 4 is the highest.

The funding level is not intended to equate to the exact cost of providing support.

For Help

You can contact the Department of Social Services (DSS) Case Based Funding Helpdesk on 1800 034 887 or by email at Helpdesk.CBF@dss.gov.au, if you have any queries.

Disclaimer

These Guidelines are designed to assist ADEs in understanding the DMI and evidence requirements. ADEs must also refer to their Funding Agreement in its entirety to understand their full obligations under the Disability Employment Assistance activity.

Part A – DMI Policy Requirements

1 Disability Maintenance Instrument (DMI)

The Disability Maintenance Instrument (DMI) is a tool that measures the level of disability-related support that the ADE has to provide to help a Supported Employee reach and maintain an employment outcome, and translates these support needs into a funding level.

1.1 Key Policy Statements

Tables 1 and 2 identify some key areas that must be met when addressing the DMI requirements.

Table 1: Key Policy Statements that Relate to the Disability Maintenance Instrument

Key Questions	Key DMI Statement
What is an Employment Outcome?	An Employment Outcome is 13 cumulative weeks of employment for a minimum of 8 hours[2] per week achieved within 12 months of starting employment.
When should the first DMI Assessment be finalised?	The first DMI Assessment must be finalised when the employment outcome is achieved.
When should a DMI Reassessment take place and evidence compilation start?	Evidence recording and compilation for a DMI Reassessment may be started 6 months prior to, and must start no later than three months prior to it being Authorised on FOFMS.
Who should have a DMI Reassessment, and when?	DMI Reassessments are only conducted if DSS, the ADE, or the Supported Employee, their family or carer requests that a DMI Reassessment take place in accordance with the Trigger Table at Appendix 1. In these circumstances, the normal principals of evidence compilation apply. Any request for a DMI Reassessment from a Supported Employee, their family or carer must comply with the Trigger Table evidence requirements to be eligible for a DMI Reassessment.
When is a DMI considered to be finalised?	The final process in a DMI is when the DMI template is Authorised on FOFMS. A DMI with a status on FOFMS of Completed is not finalised, it must still be Authorised on FOFMS.

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[2] If your Outlet's full-time hours for one Business Operating Day are less than eight hours per day but greater than seven hours per day **and** a supported employee works only one full day per week, then this can count as meeting the eight hours per week requirement under this Agreement – refer to paragraph 20 of the Operational Guidelines.

Table 2: Key DMI Statements

Key Questions	Key DMI Statement
How should Supported Employees be involved?	All Supported Employees must be informed about the DMI, why it is being done, and what information is being collected, for every DMI.
How long should it take to complete the DMI process?	The DMI does not have to be completed in a single session. It is designed to be conducted over a period of time – documenting, compiling and collecting evidence, discussing and deciding results with other staff and entering the information into the DMI tool on FOFMS.
What happens if a mistake is made when finalising a DMI?	Information in the DMI can be changed only up until the Authorisation step. After Authorisation the information cannot be changed until the Supported Employee is Reassessed. At least three months must elapse before a Reassessment can be done and then only if a DMI Reassessment Trigger applies (Refer to Appendix 1). This means that the Authorising Officer must ensure that all information is correct and meets all requirements as described in these Guidelines before Authorising the DMI on FOFMS.
How should DMI evidence be stored and for how long?	All electronic and hard copy evidence should be stored as per the requirements set out in the *Privacy Act 1988* and retained for a period of five years.

1.2 The Principles of Evidence Compilation

DMI evidence compilation must meet the principles as set out in Table 3.

Table 3: The Principles of Evidence Compilation

DMI Principle	Description
Current	The evidence is compiled for a DMI Assessment during the 13 weeks after the Intake Assessment Date during which a Supported Employee Works the minimum hours required to achieve an Employment Outcome. or The evidence is compiled for a DMI Reassessment within three to six months prior to finalisation of the Reassessment and can include significant pieces of evidence (e.g. wage assessment, diagnosis/ medical incident, critical incidents, Employment Assistance Plan and Occupational Health and Safety incident) within the previous 24 months. To be current, evidence from the week prior to a DMI being finalised must be included.
Authentic	The evidence comes from the specific workplace (or has direct impact on the workplace) and is based on documented support needs. The level of need is demonstrated by the level of support provided.
Sufficient	The evidence compiled includes <u>all</u> critical incident and external reports applicable to work, as well as observational evidence compiled over enough working days, i.e.: • a <u>minimum</u> of 13 discrete days of observational data with evidence recorded on a weekly basis.[3] The evidence must reflect the frequency[4] of support provided. Frequency of support provided can be recorded as a daily total. Where an instance of Special Assistance[5] is provided, the <u>duration</u>[6] and frequency of support must be recorded.
Reliable	The evidence comes from a variety of sources (e.g. Employment Assistance Plans, wage assessments, training notes/ records, medical/ health professional reports, observations with case notes/ file notes, critical incidents' briefs, behaviour management plans, etc) to reflect the Supported Employee's average or usual support needs and abilities.
Valid	The evidence is directly related to the DMI domains and assessment items and directly related to the individual (not generic evidence for a group). The same piece of evidence may apply to a number of domains.

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[3] If there has not been any support/assistance provided in a particular domain there would also be no evidence collected for that domain

[4] 'Frequency' means the number of times, or how often something occurs (e.g. 5 x per day)

[5] 'Special Assistance' is one of the DMI domains

[6] 'Duration' means the amount of time something takes (e.g. three hours)

1.3   Rules for Finalisation of a DMI

The rules and circumstances about when a DMI should be finalised for both new and existing Supported Employees are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Rules for Finalisation of a DMI

Type of DMI	Who	Rules
DMI Assessment	New Supported Employee.	A DMI Assessment must be conducted for all new Supported Employees once they achieve an Employment Outcome.
DMI Reassessment	Existing Supported Employees	DMI Reassessments are only conducted if DSS, the ADE, or the Supported Employee, their family or carer requests that a DMI Reassessment takes place in accordance with the Trigger Table at Appendix 1.

1.4   Rules for Evidence Compilation

Table 5 provides the rules about when to start collecting evidence for both the initial DMI and any subsequent reassessments.

Table 5: When to Start Compiling DMI Evidence

Focus	Rule
DMI Assessment for new Supported Employees	Start compiling evidence from the Intake Completion Date on FOFMS. This is the date you Authorised the individual's Intake Assessment on FOFMS and is also known as the Start Date of a Case.
DMI Reassessments	Document why you are undertaking a DMI Reassessment (including requests from the Supported Employee, their family or carer and the evidence to support the Trigger). Start compiling evidence from the date you observe the Trigger (refer to Appendix 1) and continue to compile the evidence for 13 weeks before finalising the DMI Reassessment.

1.5   Steps for Finalisation of a DMI Incorporating Rules and Principles

Tables 6, 7 and 8 provide a step-by-step process of how to go about finalising an initial DMI Assessment, a DMI Reassessment and the organisational planning that should be occurring to make it happen.

Table 6: Steps for finalisation of an Initial DMI Assessment

Step	Name of Step	Process
1	**Obtain client consent[7]**	You must capture an individual's Consent when the person first requests assistance from you or before their Intake Assessment is Authorised[7] on FOFMS.
2	**Start Case on FOFMS**	Complete and Authorise the Intake Assessment on FOFMS.
3	**Inform Supported Employee**	Inform the Supported Employee about the DMI Assessment process, why it is done, who does it, and what information is being compiled.
4	**Compile the evidence**	Plan and commence evidence compilation phase. Identify who is involved in compiling, collecting and recording information. Commence evidence compilation over 13 cumulative weeks while the Supported Employee Works the minimum hours.
5	**Collate and analyse evidence**	Collate evidence and analyse in relation to DMI questions for each domain.
6	**Complete DMI Assessment on FOFMS**	Refer to information on the DMI and make a judgment on the answer for each question (i.e. assessment item) and Complete the DMI Assessment on FOFMS.
7	**Check accuracy**	Check the accuracy of the content of the DMI Assessment as related to the evidence.
8	**Authorise DMI Assessment**	An Authorising Officer to Authorise the DMI Assessment on FOFMS (Note that the DMI Assessment cannot be changed after this step has been finalised). The DMI Assessment process is not finalised until the DMI Assessment has been Authorised on FOFMS.
9	**DMI score will be generated**	A score and funding level is then automatically generated by FOFMS.

Note: Preparing an Employment Assistance Plan (EAP) is no longer linked to a Supported Employee achieving an Employment Outcome or the initial DMI Assessment process. The EAP is prepared with the Supported Employee within four months of the Supported Employee Starting.[8]

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[7] Paragraph 7, Operational Guidelines
[8] Paragraph 16, Operational Guidelines

Table 7: Steps for finalising of a DMI Reassessment

DMI Reassessments are only conducted if DSS, the ADE, or the Supported Employee, their family or carer requests that a DMI Reassessment takes place in accordance with the Trigger Table at Appendix 1. You will be required to provide evidence of the Trigger to support the DMI Reassessment.

Step	Name of Step	Process
1	**Decision by DSS, ADE, or the Supported Employee, family or carer to complete a DMI Reassessment in accordance with the reduced Triggers Table (Appendix 1)**	Record the Trigger that supports the decision to undertake a DMI Reassessment including documentation from family, carers, medical profession etc. Inform relevant staff and plan evidence compilation phase. Identify who is involved in compiling, collecting and recording information.
2	**Inform Supported Employee and obtain Consent**	Inform the Supported Employee about the DMI Reassessment process, why it is done, who does it, and what information is being compiled. Obtain Consent prior to collecting any evidence.[7]
3	**Compile the evidence**	Plan and commence evidence compilation phase. Identify who is involved in compiling, collecting and recording information. Commence evidence compilation over 13 cumulative weeks where a Supported Employee Works the minimum hours.
4	**Collate and analyse evidence**	Collate evidence and analyse in relation to DMI questions for each domain.
5	**Complete DMI Reassessment on FOFMS**	Refer to information on the DMI Reassessment and make a judgment on the answer for each question and complete the DMI Reassessment on FOFMS.
6	**Check accuracy**	Check the accuracy of the content of the DMI Reassessment as related to the evidence.
7	**Authorise DMI Reassessment**	An Authorising Officer to Authorise the DMI Reassessment on FOFMS (Note that the DMI Reassessment cannot be changed after this step has been finalised). The DMI Reassessment process is not finalised until the DMI Reassessment has been Authorised on FOFMS.
8	**DMI score will be generated**	A score and funding level is then automatically generated by FOFMS.
9	**Update Employment Assistance Plan**	Update the Employment Assistance Plan for the Supported Employee to whom the DMI Reassessment relates as soon as the DMI Reassessment is finalised.[9] The update of the EAP may not mean any new goals.

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[9] Paragraph 16 Operational Guidelines

Table 8: Planning the Process

What	Identify	Comments
Plan the roles and responsibilities	• Who the team is, including internal/ external key personnel relevant to employment support • Who will be the lead person • Who will make observations, do recording • Who will compile the information • Who will analyse the information and make a judgment on it • Who will Complete the DMI on FOFMS • Who will be the Authorising Officer (Authorise the DMI on FOFMS) • Who will be responsible for storing the information	A team approach is preferred to ensure a more holistic approach. However, in small ADEs there may only be a small number of personnel involved who complete a number of the tasks.
Plan evidence compilation processes	• Identify multiple sources of evidence and where to find them • Develop relevant templates for recording standardised observations, including the DMI domain, type of support required, level of support, how much support, who gave the support, how long it took (special assistance only), date support was provided • Develop relevant templates for critical incidents, behaviour management plans, etc.	See Part B, Section 3.3 for more information; Table 9, examples in Sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 and appendices.
Finalise the DMI process	Follow steps and processes outlined in Table 6, Part A, Section 1.5	See Part B, Sections 2 and 3. More information can be sourced from *Disability Maintenance Instrument: Frequently Asked Questions* and *Evidence Guide for Business Services.*

Part B – DMI Implementation

2   Finalising a DMI

This Section outlines when, who and how DMIs are finalised.

Key Question	Statement
When is a DMI considered to be finalised?	The last process in the finalisation of a DMI is when the DMI template is Authorised on FOFMS. A DMI with a status on FOFMS of Completed is not finalised, it must still be Authorised on FOFMS.

2.1   When Should the DMI be finalised?

You must conduct a DMI Assessment for all new Supported Employees when they achieve an Employment Outcome.

There is also an opportunity to reassess Supported Employees using the DMI if their work-related support needs change significantly. For example, the ADE may observe worsening health status or disability, changes in a Supported Employee's personal circumstances that affect their work or their work load. These circumstances are outlined in the DMI Reassessment Triggers Table in Appendix 1.

It is important that you conduct DMIs on time because payments will cease and cases will be 'Exited' on FOFMS if DMIs are not Completed and Authorised on FOFMS. If payments cease or the case is 'Exited', because you failed to Complete and Authorise a DMI, payments not made to you because of this will not be back-paid.

You are responsible for monitoring the initial DMI Assessment due date for new Supported Employees and should have a system in place to manage this information.

2.2   Who should finalise a DMI, and how should a DMI be finalised?

Before a DMI can be finalised, the staff member responsible for the DMI must consider current evidence that has been compiled over the appropriate period and make a judgement about each DMI item based on that evidence. For new Supported Employees, current evidence means information compiled over 13 cumulative weeks during the Employment Assistance Phase.

Ideally, the person completing the DMI will consult and meet with other key internal and external personnel involved with the Supported Employee's work, or in compiling evidence. This will ensure that a holistic approach is taken and all work-support contexts are considered when completing the DMI items. The responsible person will then consider the evidence against the items for each Domain on the DMI, and make an objective judgement about which rating best describes the Supported Employee's needs.

To make sure the decisions about ratings are sound, you should have in place ways to bring all the evidence together and draw out the facts. This may mean counting how many times a Supported Employee did something or needed support. It may also mean interpreting descriptions about the Supported Employee's needs. The DMI should be based on evidence from a number of different sources so that the likelihood of bias is reduced. Using evidence from a number of sources also makes it possible to confirm or question facts. If all the sources indicate the same thing, there is solid evidence on which to base decisions or claims. If there are inconsistencies or questions about the facts, there is a need to look at the evidence again, or to seek out more evidence.

All personnel in your ADE need to understand the importance of the DMI. Everyone may have some involvement in compiling evidence for the DMI and the evidence will ultimately determine the ratings selected, and the final DMI score.

2.3   Authorising DMIs

The only way to create and submit a DMI is on FOFMS. Only authorised personnel can access FOFMS and the DMI, with two levels of access available:

1. Service Provider Caseworker. This is the basic access level. People with Service Provider Caseworker access are generally responsible for managing case records including Completing the DMI and can enter responses, submit a DMI for Authorisation and print and view an Authorised DMI

2. Service Provider Authorising Officer. The Service Provider Authorising Officer has a greater level of access. They can perform all of the functions of a Service Provider Caseworker, but are also responsible for checking the content of the DMI before it is finalised and Authorising the DMI. A DMI Authorising Officer can also reject a DMI, if required.

In smaller ADEs, one person may have responsibility for Completing and Authorising DMIs. However, where possible, it is recommended that these roles remain separated.

Once a DMI has been Authorised on FOFMS it is a final record and cannot be changed. It is vital therefore that evidence meets all of the required policies, rules and principles for evidence compilation as described in these Guidelines, and that the DMI answers to the items accurately reflect what the evidence is saying.

2.4   Involving Supported Employees

Under the *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988*, you are obliged to explain to the Supported Employee (or their advocate) their rights regarding compilation and use of their personal information.

With this in mind, ADEs should inform Supported Employees about the DMI, its purpose, and the anticipated evidence compilation process as part of the intake process and again if a DMI Reassessment needs to be conducted. Consent should be obtained using a Client Consent Form consistent with the DSS Client Consent Form, which is available from the literature tab on FOFMS. The completed Client Consent Form should be kept on the Supported Employee's file.

The extent of Supported Employee involvement in completing a DMI is up to the professional judgement of those undertaking the DMI. It is not necessary for the Supported Employee to be present when the DMI is finalised. Supported Employees who have excellent cognitive capacity and communication skills are a good example of a situation in which it may be possible to involve the employee in the assessment process. During some on-the-job observations, Supported Employees may be asked to describe any difficulties they may have in performing their job.

You may make details of finalised DMIs relating to a Supported Employee available to them if requested by them, but may not release any copy of the DMI Assessment/Reassessment without the permission of DSS.

Whatever the situation or capability of the Supported Employee, it is important to note that Supported Employees must never be asked to conduct their own DMI – it is not their responsibility, and would compromise the outcome.

3 Evidence Compilation Process

Before finalising a DMI, the Supported Employee is observed for a set period (see Table 3, Part A, Section 1.3) to compile evidence about how much support they will require in the workplace.

So that funding is equitable and fair for all Supported Employees, it is important that ratings are supported by appropriate documentary evidence. The DMI requires the assessor to record the source/s of evidence they have used to determine ratings for each functional domain. This allows the source to be verified by the Authorising Officer, a Disability Enterprise Manager or a DSS Auditor.

This Section outlines the 'rules' for compiling the DMI evidence, identifies the features of a robust evidence compilation process and provides examples of good practice in planning your processes.

3.1   Evidence Compilation Rules

In order to finalise a DMI, information must be compiled according to the rules and principles shown in Table 3, Part A, Section 1.2. Sources of evidence are Supported Employee records, such as critical incident evidence, external reports and current observational evidence collected every week and over enough working days in the required period. This information becomes the evidence on which the DMI is based. Other significant information needs to be recorded for DMI Reassessments in accordance with the Triggers identified in the Triggers Table at Appendix 1. The DMI Reassessment can then be finalised after 13 weeks of evidence collection.

For example, one of the items in the DMI asks the following:

> *Over the past three months[10], what level of assistance has this service provided to enable the worker to maintain friendly and cooperative relationships with others?*

For this item, some appropriate sources of evidence to determine the level of support needed by the Supported Employee would be:

- records by the work supervisor about what support has been given and when
- observing the Supported Employee in the workplace, and
- the Supported Employee's Employment Assistance Plan.

These sources provide evidence that is documented and has been recorded in the Supported Employee's work environment. On the other hand, some sources of information may not provide good evidence. For example, comments from the Supported Employee's parents on this item would not be a good source of evidence. The parents may not know what assistance is provided in the workplace and they may not be objective so the information they provide is potentially unreliable or 'hearsay'.

3.2   Managing DMI Evidence Compilation

You should have robust systems and processes to manage administration of DMIs and evidence compilation efficiently and effectively. Some of the tasks are planning and coordinating evidence compilation processes, developing documentation systems, distributing observation sheets, overseeing observational data collection and training support staff about the DMI and their responsibilities.

The DMI is not meant to be an entirely separate process from the other work of the organisation. You are also obliged to demonstrate how your organisation complies with the 12 Disability Services Standards, workplace assessments and wage assessments. You are advised to map the requirements and sources of evidence for all internal and external requirements in order to design and streamline their administrative processes.[11]

ADEs will develop processes and systems that suit their own business model; these processes must be robust and comply with their contractual obligations.

3.3   Planning the Evidence Compilation Processes

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[10] The past 13 weeks is defined as the 13 week collection period and does not necessarily mean the three calendar months prior to a DMI.

[11] The *Evidence Guide for Business Services (2007)* provides detailed advice about how to streamline evidence collection processes across the range of requirements.

You should plan the evidence compilation process so that information is available about all assessment items and domains. You must also be clear about what the evidence is needed for. Some evidence can be relevant to more than one domain (see Part C Template for an example where evidence is relevant to more than one domain).

Although it may seem overwhelming and time consuming to compile evidence against 9 questions (assessment items), particularly for smaller organisations, there are systems you can introduce to streamline the process.

It is only necessary to collect evidence against the domains that are relevant to the individual.

The domains and assessment items are shown in Part D, Section 4.

3.3.1 Suggested Approach

One way of planning the process is to start by focusing on the nine domains in the DMI. Then, against each domain record sources of evidence already developed or maintained for other purposes and also consider what additional information is needed. Tables 6, 7 and 8 (Part A, Section 1.5) provide guidance for planning the process, and Table 9 (below) outlines examples of possible sources of evidence for each domain.

Table 9: Examples of Sources of Evidence

Domain	Examples of possible sources of evidence
Social and Behavioural Assistance **Assistance to achieve a range of social, behavioural and emotional abilities that are required in most employment situations.** **Example:** • **maintaining friendly and cooperative relationships** • **interacting with people confidently and appropriately** • **behaving appropriately** • **controlling anger and frustration** • **coping with work-related stress and pressure** • **maintaining a positive outlook and mood** • **maintaining personal hygiene, grooming and dress.**	Professional assessments Recent workplace assessment Work reports Behavioural plan Case notes Incident reports Observations of Supported Employee Data compilation form to collect specific instances where support was provided, why, what type of support and date
Cognitive Assistance **Assistance required to learn work-related tasks, solve problems, make decisions, understand instructions and remember tasks and instructions.**	Work reports Employment Assistance Plan Case notes Observations of Supported Employee Data compilation form to collect specific instances where support was provided, why, what type of support and date
Vocational Assistance **Assistance to achieve skills and attitudes that are important in employment settings, such as:** • **understanding the basic requirements of employment** • **work productivity and work quality** • **ability to work under supervision on a task** • **appropriate response to supervision and instructions** • **attendance and punctuality** • **compliance with safety requirements** • **awareness and acceptance of own abilities and limitations** • **motivation.**	Professional reports Case notes Work attendance records Observations of Supported Employee Recent workplace assessment Wage assessment Data compilation form to collect specific instances where support was provided, why, what type of support and date
Physical Assistance and Personal Care **Assistance required to manipulate and move objects, move safely around the work environment, set up and arrange own work environment, equipment and materials, and attend to personal care needs. Eyesight. Assistance required with personal care, such as toileting, preparing and consuming food and drinks in the workplace, managing medication, and transferring to and from a wheelchair.**	Professional reports Observations of Supported Employee Case notes Work reports Data compilation form to collect specific instances where support was provided, why, what type of support and date
Communication Abilities **Abilities associated with using and understanding language (spoken, signed or other communication), including hearing,**	Case notes Observations of Supported Employee

Domain	Examples of possible sources of evidence
comprehension, speech/ expressive language, use of a language other than English, appropriate use of language, and language used in the workplace.	
Workplace Environment Assistance **Assistance provided in assessing or modifying the workplace, job redesign, selection of adaptive equipment, training the Supported Employee and co-workers in the use of adaptive equipment or technology, and supporting co-workers and employers to adjust to and accommodate the Supported Employee's abilities and workplace support needs.**	Case notes Client training records Professional reports Observations of Supported Employee Data compilation form to collect specific instances where support was provided, why, what type of support and date
Special Assistance **Additional assistance or support that may be required by some people. For example, physical or non-physical intervention to prevent injury to self or others, first aid treatment for medical conditions, such as epilepsy or asthma, and counseling or other interventions for mental health-related episodes.**	Case notes Critical incident reports Data compilation form to collect specific instances where support was provided, why, what type of support, duration of support, and date Medical reports/ care plans
Other Assistance **Examples – advising or counseling the Supported Employee's family, assisting the Supported Employee in matters involving other agencies, such as Centrelink, liaising with other agencies and treating professionals, transporting the Supported Employee to and from work, interpreter assistance, English language or literacy training.**	Training records Case notes Professional reports
Variable Assistance **Identifies the size and frequency of fluctuations or variations in the Supported Employee's assistance needs and any evidence that the Supported Employee has an episodic or deteriorating condition.**	Case notes Critical incident reports

3.3.2 Other Planning Considerations

When planning evidence compilation processes you should consider the full range of support required by the employee. For example, if the Supported Employee has a physical disability, their support needs will not necessarily all lie within the Physical domain. The Supported Employee may also require support with social or vocational issues associated with maintaining employment or with items in the Workplace Environment or Other Assistance domains and so on.

Where a Supported Employee is profoundly deaf, the hearing question in the Communication Abilities domain will apply. Other questions within the Communication Abilities domain are also likely to register a level of support required by the Supported Employee. The support the Supported Employee requires may also be reflected in the other domains. When conducting a DMI for a profoundly deaf Supported Employee, assessors should consider, for all domains, whether some form of interpreter support or other communication support is required.

Some ADEs employ groups of Supported Employees with similar disabilities and who may have similar day-to-day support needs. For example, the Supported Employees may need help during meal times or to set up a job. Or the same employee may need the same support every day. Although you may be tempted to summarise the support provided, this is not a valid way of recording support. You must still record discrete instances of support provided in the evidence compilation period.

3.3.3 Examples – Planning Data Compilation for a Single Domain

Example 1 – Vocational Domain

You are planning how to determine the level of support needed to be punctual in starting and finishing work, a question under the Vocational domain. You decide the best way to do this is:

1. ask the Supported Employee's work supervisor to note if any support is provided to encourage punctuality
2. look through the records over the appropriate time period to check if the timesheets indicate a punctuality issue, or if there are records of the Supported Employee calling in to say they were going to be late for work

Asking the Supported Employee's work supervisor to observe and keep records is a good way of compiling evidence for this assessment item. The work supervisor will be well aware of when the Supported Employee arrives and leaves for work, and will also be directly involved in encouraging punctuality. Similarly, checking administration records would also be useful, as they may reveal some punctuality issues. You would probably not ask the Supported Employee's parents or work colleagues for information about their punctuality. In this situation, they may not be reliable sources of information. You need objective, documented evidence – not hearsay or undocumented verbal opinions.

Example 2 – Social and Behavioural Assistance Domain

You are planning how to determine the level of support a Supported Employee needs to control their temper in the workplace, a question in the Social and Behavioural Assistance domain: *Over the last three months, what level of assistance has this service provided to enable the worker to control anger and frustration appropriately?*

You identify a number of relevant sources of evidence, including:

1. DMI checklist
2. asking caseworkers to make case notes
3. training records
4. behaviour management plan
5. incident reports.

Example 3 – Social and Behavioural Assistance Domain

A question in the Social and Behavioural Assistance domain asks:
Over the past three months, what level of assistance has this service provided to enable the worker to maintain friendly and cooperative relationships with others?

For this assessment item, some appropriate sources of evidence to determine a Supported Employee's level of support would be:

1. notes from the work supervisor about the amount of support given
2. written observations of the Supported Employee on a number of occasions in the workplace, or
3. the Supported Employee's work assessment.

These sources provide evidence that has been recorded in the Supported Employee's work environment.

3.4 Audits

DSS conducts audits in relation to the DMI process. A DSS Funding Agreement Manager or Auditor visits ADEs to inspect processes and records, or the ADE sends copies of documentation to the Funding Agreement Manager. It is important for you to ensure that DMI processes are in place and that they meet these Guidelines.

3.4.1 Complaints and Appeals Process in relation to DMI Audits

If you disagree with an Auditor's finding regarding the DMI policy requirements or the outcome of a DMI audit or are not satisfied that the audit process was conducted fairly, you may make a complaint or appeal the ruling.

There are three steps:

Step 1:   Raise your concerns with the Auditor directly. If not resolved to your satisfaction, go to Step 2.

Step 2:   Raise your concerns with the DSS State/Territory Office Delegate. If not resolved to your satisfaction, go to Step 3.

Step 3:   Raise your concerns with DSS's National Office. Contact the Section Manager, Disability and Carers Program Branch by email at CBF helpdesk@fahcisa.gov.au.

PART C – Case Studies and Examples of Templates

Introduction to Case Studies

Part C provides two cases studies to illustrate how services should apply the Guidelines policies, rules, principles and steps for the DMI and example templates for collecting observational evidence about level of support provided.

Case Study 1 – Cathy, a new Supported Employee

The first case study follows a new employee called Cathy, who takes almost five months to achieve an Employment Outcome.

Cathy has just started working at Pretty Packaging Ltd for one day a week. Before she started work she was asked to sign a Consent form and was informed about why her personal information is collected, what personal information in collected and what happens with her personal information. Cathy's caseworker, Deirdre Started a Case for Cathy on FOFMS, by Completing and Authorising the Intake Assessment.

> Step 1 – Obtain consent and inform about personal information.
> Step 2 – Start case on FOFMS

Cathy suffers from a psychiatric disability that can affect her capacity to work on an episodic basis. Most of the time Cathy can work her one day a week, but sometimes she forgets to take her medication and doesn't always make it to work. For the first four weeks of Employment, Cathy showed up to work each Tuesday as agreed, but after that she attended work irregularly.

Starting evidence compilation for the DMI

Her caseworker, Deirdre told Cathy about the DMI Assessment process and that personal information would be collected when Cathy first started Work. Deirdre also started observations and compiling evidence about the amount and type of work-related support provided to Cathy from her first day of work.

> Step 3 – Inform supported employee
> Step 4 – Compile evidence

Making sure the evidence for the DMI is authentic, valid, reliable, current and sufficient

Because Cathy did not turn up regularly for work after the first month, the caseworker had to be sure to compile sufficient and current evidence so she could Complete a DMI Assessment once an Employment outcome was achieved. In Cathy's case, because she works one day a week, a minimum of 13 collective days of current evidence collected on a weekly basis is needed. This process is shown below.

Timeframe	Cathy's attendance record	Sufficiency of observational evidence	Amount of evidence accumulated
Weeks 1 to 4	Cathy worked every Tuesday for the first four weeks.	Deirdre collected evidence on each day Cathy worked for the first four weeks. Deirdre had collected one day of evidence a week for four weeks.	4 days/weeks
Weeks 5 to 7	Cathy did not show up to work for the next three weeks because she kept on forgetting to take her medication and was too tired to come to work.	No evidence collected.	4 days/weeks
Weeks 8 to 11	Cathy showed up to work	Deirdre continued the	8 days/weeks

Timeframe	Cathy's attendance record	Sufficiency of observational evidence	Amount of evidence accumulated
	again on the eighth week. Cathy continued to work again for another four weeks.	observations and collection of evidence in week 8. Deirdre collected one day of evidence a week for these four weeks.	
Weeks 12 to 13	Cathy missed another two weeks of work.	No evidence collected.	8 days/weeks
Weeks 14 to 18	Cathy started back again on the fourteenth week. Deirdre worked with Cathy to implement a strategy to assist her with taking her medication on a regular basis. Cathy's work attendance improved and she came to work regularly.	Deirdre again continued the observations and collection of evidence in week 14. Deirdre collected one day of evidence a week for these five weeks, meaning that in total she had collected one day of evidence a week for 13 cumulative weeks.	13 days/weeks

By week 18, Deirdre had collected evidence for the minimum time (13 days/weeks) needed. She collated her observations about the number of times different kinds of support had been provided and then analysed these against the relevant DMI questions.

Because the evidence was compiled from a variety of sources and documented appropriately Deirdre Completed a DMI Assessment for Cathy. Her manager, Gill, then checked whether the ratings accurately matched the evidence. Once Gill was satisfied that the ratings matched the evidence he Authorised the DMI on FOFMS.

Cathy had reached an Employment Outcome and Deirdre had also been able to collect sufficient evidence to support the DMI Assessment.

A DMI score was automatically generated by the FOFMS system when Gill Authorised the DMI Assessment and the Disability Enterprise started to receive the associated maintenance funding fee to assist them to support Cathy.

Step 5 – Collate and analyse evidence
Step 6 – Complete DMI
Step 7 – Check Accuracy
Step 8 – Authorise DMI Assessment

Step 9 – A DMI score generated by FOFMS

Check the rules

A check of the principles and rules for compiling DMI evidence showed that they had been met.

Q1:   Did Pretty Packaging Ltd start compiling DMI evidence as required?

Yes, Deirdre, Cathy's caseworker, started compiling evidence immediately after Consent and the Intake Assessment processes were completed.

Q2:   Was the evidence current?

Yes, the observational evidence was accumulated over each of the 13 weeks contributing to Cathy's Employment Outcome.

Q3:   Was the evidence authentic?

Yes, Deirdre used evidence from the workplace and from reports about Cathy's condition that directly related to how she functions in the workplace.

Q4:   *Was the evidence reliable?*

Yes, Deirdre considered evidence from a variety of sources, such as observational information and external reports.

Q5:   *Was sufficient evidence compiled upon which judgment about ratings for each DMI question could be made?*

Yes, Deirdre considered all relevant information sources, such as critical incident reports and behavior management and collected the minimum 13 days of observational information over each of 13 weeks as required.

Case Study 2 – Darren, a long-term Supported Employee

Darren has been working at Food for Thought Ltd three days a week for the last 2 ½ years. Darren was a reliable and enthusiastic employee, who rarely missed a day of work. Lately, Darren has been missing days at work and his performance has dropped due to his declining health. The organisation has decided to conduct a DMI Reassessment for Darren in accordance with the Triggers and supported by a medical certificate from Darren's GP.

Starting evidence compilation for the DMI Reassessment

Darren's Caseworker, Arleen, informed Darren about why a DMI Reassessment is being done, what the process is and Darren signed a new Client Consent Form.

Arleen has started observations and compilation of evidence about the amount and type of work-related support provided to Darren. Arleen started this process as soon as a decision was made by Food For Thought that Darren's declining health was impacting on his performance and they would complete a DMI Reassessment under the revised Triggers Table using the supporting medical certificate from Darren's GP as the Trigger Evidence.

Step 1 – Record the Trigger and Trigger evidence.
Step 2 – Inform the Supported Employee and Obtain Consent
Step 3 – Compile the evidence

Making sure the evidence for the DMI is authentic, reliable, valid, current and sufficient

Arleen knows that she will need to collect at least one day of observational evidence a week for 13 weeks when Darren is working. This will satisfy the requirement that the evidence is collected over enough working days to reflect Darren's real support needs.

Arleen also refers to Darren's Supported Employee file and includes two critical incident reports in the evidence – one that occurred three months ago and another that occurred seven months ago. Arleen considers that these two incidents required special support and that it was important that this evidence not be excluded.

Darren missed some days of work in the next 13 weeks but Arleen was able to collect sufficient evidence for one day a week for 13 weeks, a total of 13 days. The evidence was also collected from a variety of sources and documented appropriately.

Arleen collated and analysed all her observational evidence and considered the results against the relevant DMI questions. She checked whether other support staff members agreed with her ratings.

Step 4 – Collate and analyse evidence

Because Arleen is an Authorising Officer she could both Complete and Authorise the DMI Reassessment for Darren.

A DMI score was automatically generated by the FOFMS system after the DMI Reassessment was Authorised on FOFMS and the maintenance funding fee for Darren had moved from Level 2 to Level 3.

As soon as the DMI Reassessment was finalised, Arleen sat down with Darren to discuss and review his Employment Assistance Plan. They agreed some new goals and training would be incorporated into the plan.

Step 5 – Complete DMI
Step 6 – Check Accuracy
Step 7 – Authorise DMI
Step 8 – Generate DMI score
Step 9 – Update EAP

Check the rules

A check of the principles and rules for compiling DMI evidence showed that they had been met.

Q1:   Did Food for Thought Ltd start compiling DMI evidence as required?

Yes, Arleen started compiling evidence when the decision to conduct a DMI Reassessment was triggered by Darren's declining health and a supporting Medical Certificate. The ADE had continued to document critical incidents and behaviour management throughout Darren's employment.

Q2:   Was the evidence current?

Yes, Arleen used evidence from the workplace from within three to six months prior to finalising the DMI Reassessment and reports of critical incidents that occurred over the last two years.

Q3:   Was the evidence authentic?

Yes, Arleen used evidence from the workplace and from reports about Darren's condition that directly related to how he functions in the workplace.

Q4:   Was the evidence reliable?

Yes, Arleen considered evidence from a variety of sources, such as observational information and Supported Employee files.

Q5:   Was sufficient evidence compiled upon which judgment about ratings for each DMI question could be made?

Yes, Arleen considered all relevant information sources, such as critical incident reports and behavior management and collected the minimum 13 days/weeks of observational information.

Example Templates

Templates 1 to 3 are <u>examples</u> that illustrate how the DMI Policy Requirements are applied. ***Template 4 is an example of a template/format used to collect the evidence that is inadequate*** and would not meet the DMI Policy Requirements.

Template 1: Evidence collecting template which covers all domains for one week
[Example of a template for collecting <u>good quality</u> observational evidence]

Week beginning: <u>Monday 2 July 2012</u>

Day	DMI Domain		Comments
	Social and Behavioural		
	Prompts	Time taken	
M	n/a		
T	////	n/a	John shouted at Geoff when Geoff threw the green bottles in the clear glass pile. Reminded John about working as a team and supervisors being the ones to ask others to do their jobs, not him.
W	/	n/a	
Th	////5 ///	n/a	Reminded John about not bossing other people about after he shouted at Geoff again (for more details about incident see also Special Assistance Domain).
F	n/a		
	Cognitive		
	Prompts	Time taken	
M	n/a		
T	//	n/a	Reminded John which bins to sort different types of glass into in the morning.
W	//	n/a	As above
Th	//	n/a	As above
F	n/a		
	Vocational		
	Prompts	Time taken	
M	n/a		
T	//	n/a	Reminded John to wear gloves and safety gear every morning and after lunch every day.
W	//	n/a	
T	//	n/a	
F	n/a		
	Physical and personal care		
	Prompts	Time taken	
M	n/a		
T	-		
W	-		
Th	-		
F	n/a		
	Communication		
	Prompts	Time taken	
M	n/a		
T	////	n/a	Please see Incident Report dated 03/07/2012 re John swearing at Geoff.
W	/	n/a	
Th	///	n/a	Prompted John to speak nicely to delivery driver.
F	n/a		
	Workplace Environment		
	Prompts	Time taken	
M	n/a		

Day	DMI Domain		Comments
T	-		
W	-		
Th	-		
F	n/a		
	Special Assistance		
	Prompts	Time taken	
M	n/a		
T	-		
W	-		
Th		90 mins	Reminded John about not bossing other people about after he shouted at Geoff again. John was very frustrated with not being in control and shouted and swore at Mary when she tried to calm him down. Mary started to cry so I took John to the kitchen to give him his medication and talk through more effective strategies to help him deal with his frustration. After 30 minutes, he was calm enough to return to work.
Th	/	5mins	Had to give John his inhaler as he was having trouble breathing after shouting incident (see above).
F	n/a		
	Other		
	Prompts	Time taken	
M	n/a		
T	-		
W	/	n/a	Talked to local Centrelink office about DSP matter.
Th	-		
F	n/a		

Note:
Only record duration of support (Time taken) under the Special Assistance domain
n/a = not applicable

Supervisor: Please sign here

Template 2: Evidence collection template for collecting evidence on one domain (Physical Assistance and Personal Care) for one week
[Example of a template for collecting good quality observational evidence]

Domain	#	Question	Assistance Provided (No. of times assisted)	Comments
Physical	4 A)	Manipulate objects and complete fine motor tasks (e.g. tasks involving dexterity of fingers) relevant to work placement.		
Physical	4 B)	Move objects around and complete gross motor tasks (e.g. tasks involving movement and coordination of arms and/or legs).		
Physical	4 C)	Lift and move objects in accordance with the requirements of work placement and within safety limits.	1	Reminded Belinda to ask for help when lifting heavy items.
Physical	4 D)	Move around the workplace or training environment freely and safely.		
Physical	4 E)	Set up and arrange own work environment, equipment and materials.	2	Helped Belinda set up her table.
Physical	4 F)	Maintain required work pace without tiring.	3	Belinda's medication makes her drowsy and she needs some prompting every afternoon to maintain her pace.
Physical	4 G)	See clearly to perform work-related activities (when wearing contact lenses or glasses if these are normally worn).		
Physical	4 H)	Attend to toileting and personal hygiene needs.		
Physical	4 I)	Prepare and consume drinks and food at work or work preparation setting.		
Physical	4 J)	Manage own medication while at work.	1	Belinda needs supervision and assistance taking her medication every morning.
Physical	4 K)	Maintain personal comfort and pressure area care (if unable to walk).		
Physical	4 L)	Manage pain associated with physical injury or illness.		
Physical	4 M)	Transfer between wheelchair and other seating and/or load and unload from wheelchair transport.		
Physical	4 EvIA)	Evidence Source – Internal assessments and observations.		
Physical	4 EvSP)	Evidence Source – Records of support provided.		
Physical	4 EvES)	Evidence Source – Evidence of external sources.		

Note: This example covers just one domain. Evidence should be collected across all domains on a weekly basis during the 13 weeks pre-DMI.

Template 3: Evidence collection template for collecting evidence on one domain (Special Assistance) for Supported Employee working one day per week

[Example of a template for collecting good quality observational evidence]

A simple data compilation template used to collect observational evidence under the Special Assistance Domain. In this example, the Caseworker records the information on the one day a week for 13 weeks that the Supported Employee works. This example is for one week and good evidence would contain similar notes for the other 12 weeks of the evidence compilation period and cover all of the domains. They record the type of support provided, date and duration of support and reason why, against each DMI question.

Type of special support provided	Date	Duration	Comments on reason	Assistance provided by
Physical intervention by staff to prevent injury to self or others (e.g. due to aggression or self-injurious behaviour).	02.07.12	10 mins	Joe annoyed at other Supported Employees. Tim telling him what to do. Joe raised his arm to hit Tim. Restrained Joe and took him outside to cool down.	Name of caseworker
Non-physical intervention by service staff to prevent injury to self or others (e.g. verbal intervention, behaviour management strategies).	02.07.12	10 mins 10 mins 10 mins	Joe shouted at Tim about who should empty the bin twice this morning and again this afternoon. Reminded Joe about appropriate language for work and redirected him to focus on work.	Name of caseworker
First aid treatment for episodic conditions such as epilepsy or asthma or incidents such as falls or other immediate threats to health.				
Counselling or other intervention for SEVERE mental health-related episodes such as severe stress, anxiety, panic attack, delusions or suicidal threat.				
Counselling for less acute issues such as grief, behavioural issues.	02.07.12	20 mins	See critical incident report 02.07.12	

Note: In this example of a template, duration is recorded because it is about the Special Assistance Domain

Template 4: Evidence collection template for collecting evidence on one domain (Vocational Assistance) for one week

[Example of a ***poor quality*** template for collecting evidence]

Week beginning: Monday 2July 2012

Task Analysis

	M	T	W	Th	F
Sort colours and whites	Y	Y	N	N	N
Load colours into Machine 1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Set Machine 1 to cold wash	N	N	N	N	N
Add detergent	Y	Y	N	N	N
Load whites into Machine 2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Set Machine 2 to hot wash	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Add detergent and bleach	Y	Y	N	N	N

Comments
George worked well all week.

Supervisor: Please sign here

Note: This template does not capture sufficient evidence. Good evidence can be directly linked to the DMI domains and includes the number of prompts to provide the necessary support. The comments should provide a description of George's support needs to complete the required tasks and the assistance provided to enable him do these tasks.

Part D – DMI Domains and Assessment Items

4 The DMI Tool

Basically, the DMI is like a questionnaire. There are nine parts (*domains*) to the questionnaire – each focusing on a specific behavioural or functional area where a Supported Employee may require assistance (for example, Vocational Assistance, Communication Abilities, Social and Behavioural Assistance).

Within each of the domains is a series of questions (*assessment items*). Each question covers a specific task or functional area that may affect the level of assistance a Supported Employee may require.

The questions (*assessment items*) collect data on the level of assistance required by using a rating system. A rating must be selected for each question, based on the evidence collected about the Supported Employee's work-related support needs over the evidence compilation period.

The rating categories used to assign a value about the amount of assistance provided are shown in Part D, Section 4.2.

4.1 DMI Domains and Items

The assessment items in the DMI are grouped into functional domains. Assessors should consider the Supported Employee's abilities and assistance needs across ALL domains and items and complete the assessment accordingly.

The DMI is comprised of nine functional domains. A description of each domain appears in the following table. Based on the assistance provided or funded by your ADE over the evidence compilation period, Assessors are asked to select the rating category, that best fits the Supported Employee's (i.e. worker's) assistance requirements for each item, in each domain.

Domain	Items
Social and Behavioural Assistance	Over the past three months, what level of assistance has this service provided to enable the worker to: 1. maintain friendly and cooperative relationships with fellow workers; 2. greet and interact with people confidently; 3. behave in a manner that is appropriate to the work environment; 4. control anger and frustration appropriately; 5. cope with work-related or employment preparation-related stress and pressure appropriately; 6. maintain a positive outlook and mood most of the time; 7. manage fear or anxiety about work issues; 8. display emotions appropriate to the situation; 9. cope with change in the work environment; 10. address attitudinal barriers e.g. difficulty in dealing with authority figures and difficulty accepting direction; and 11. maintain personal hygiene, grooming and dress appropriate to the work or training environments.
Cognitive Assistance	Over the last three months, what level of assistance has this service provided to enable the worker to:

Domain	Items
	1. learn complex tasks (e.g. involving three or more steps) relevant to their current job after being shown or instructed in the task once or twice; 2. learn simple tasks (e.g. involving one or two steps) relevant to their current job after being shown or instructed in the task once or twice; 3. solve problems and make decisions appropriate to current work role; 4. understand and follow complex new instructions (e.g. involving three or more steps); 5. understand and follow simple new instructions (e.g. involving one or two simple steps); 6. remember tasks or instructions for the remainder of the work/ training day after being shown or told; 7. remember tasks or instructions several days after being shown or told; 8. concentrate on tasks without being distracted; and 9. plan and organise work tasks.
Vocational Assistance	Over the past three months, what level of assistance has this service provided to enable the worker to: 1. undertake the full range of tasks required for current job; 2. understand the basic requirements of employment (e.g. attending work, reporting to supervisor, complying with instructions); 3. demonstrate a level of work productivity and work quality acceptable in the workplace (including under supported wages system); 4. work on task under the usual supervisory conditions for at least 30 minutes; 5. work on task under the usual supervisory conditions for at least 1 hour; 6. understand time and be punctual in starting and finishing work and scheduled breaks; 7. respond appropriately to instructions from work/ work preparation supervisor; 8. use initiative appropriately in the workplace (e.g. initiate work tasks, move on to the next step, etc); 9. asks for assistance appropriately if required; 10. comply with safety requirements in the workplace or work preparation setting; 11. attend at least 95% of work or work preparation sessions; 12. give appropriate notification of any absences (e.g. due to sickness); 13. contact employer by telephone; 14. adapt to environmental conditions in the workplace (e.g. noise, heat, cold, humidity); 15. travel to and from work independently (e.g. travel training or assisting with transport bookings); 16. develop awareness and acceptance of own abilities and limitations in work activities and employment goals; and 17. be motivated and enthusiastic about current employment.
Physical Assistance and Personal Care	Over the past three months, what level of assistance has this service provided to enable the worker to:

Domain	Items
	1. manipulate objects and complete fine motor tasks (e.g. tasks involving dexterity of fingers) relevant to work placement; 2. move objects around and complete gross motor tasks (e.g. tasks involving movement and coordination of arms and/or legs); 3. lift and move objects in accordance with the requirements of work placement and within safety limits; 4. move around the workplace or training environment freely and safely; 5. set up and arrange own work environment, equipment and materials; 6. maintain required work pace without tiring; 7. see clearly to perform work-related activities (when wearing contact lenses or glasses if these are normally worn); 8. attend to toileting and personal hygiene needs; 9. prepare and consume drinks and food at work or work preparation setting; 10. manage own medication while at work; 11. maintain personal comfort and pressure area care (if unable to walk); 12. manage pain associated with physical injury or illness; and 13. transfer between wheelchair and other seating and/or load and unload from wheelchair transport.
Communication Abilities **Communication A**	Assessors are asked to select the ratings category that best fits the worker's communication abilities for each item: 1. understanding language; 2. expressive language; 3. speaks another language - This worker speaks a language other than English and; 4. hearing
Communication B	Based on observations and assessment over the past three months, select the rating category that best fits this worker's communication abilities for each item below: 1. Other Language Use Issues - Has echolalic speech (i.e. repeats what others say), rushed speech (i.e. talks rapidly) or speaks continuously 2. Other Language Use Issues - Has speech that is disorganized, lacks meaning or doesn't make sense to the listener 3. Other Language Use Issues - Is reluctant to speak in work-related situations 4. Other Language Use Issues - Uses offensive language at least once per week in the work or work preparation setting 5. Language Used in the Workplace - This person's main language (e.g spoken English, another spoken language, or sign language) is used routinely by: (select from drop-down list)
Workplace Environment Assistance	During the past three months, which of the following the types of assistance has your service provided or funded for the worker:

Domain	Items
	1. workplace assessment (e.g. assessment of worksites for physical accessibility and/or modification requirements); 2. negotiating and arranging modifications to the workplace environment (e.g. building modifications, ramps); 3. job modification or redesign to match the capabilities of the worker; 4. selection and procurement of adaptive equipment or technology; 5. training the worker in the use of adaptive equipment or technology; 6. training co-workers in the use of adaptive equipment and technology; 7. supporting co-workers to adjust to the worker's abilities and workplace support needs; 8. supporting the employer to accommodate the worker's abilities and workplace support needs
Special Assistance	During the past three months, has the worker required any of the following types of special assistance in the workplace or preparation setting: 1. physical intervention by service staff to prevent injury to self or others (e.g. due to aggression or self-injurious behaviour); 2. non-physical intervention by service staff to prevent injury to self or others (e.g. verbal intervention, behaviour management strategies); 3. first aid treatment for episodic conditions such as epilepsy or asthma or incidents such as falls or other immediate threats to health; 4. counselling or other intervention for severe mental health-related episodes such as severe stress, anxiety, panic attack, delusions or suicidal threat; and 5. counselling for less acute issues such as grief, behavioural issues
Other Assistance	During the past three months, which of the following types of other assistance has your service provided or funded? 1. advising or counselling the worker's family regarding the worker's employment related issues: 2. assisting the worker with employment-related matters involving other agencies (e.g. declaring income to Centrelink); 3. liaising with other agencies and treating professionals regarding the worker's disability, medical or psychiatric condition; 4. providing recognised vocational training (i.e. training towards a recognised vocational certificate or Australian Apprenticeship); 5. transporting the worker to and from work, training or other employment-related appointments; 6. interpreter assistance for interviews and/or work orientation (e.g. sign language interpreter or other language interpreter); 7. English language and/or literacy training for the worker; 8. assisting the worker with career planning, development and progression.
Variable Assistance	The Variable Assistance Domain has three categories. 1. Based on your assessment, observations and other evidence collected over the past three months have this worker's assistance needs been: (select from drop-down

Domain	Items
	list)
	2. Have the fluctuations in this worker's assistance needs been: (select from drop-down list)
	3. Is there any evidence within the past two years, that this worker has an episodic condition (e.g. psychiatric illness) or deteriorating condition (e.g. multiple sclerosis)? (select from drop-down list)

Tip: A Microsoft Word version of the DMI, which you may wish to use or adapt for evidence collection purposes, can be downloaded from the Literature tab in FOFMS.

4.2   The Rating Categories

Each domain contains a number of items for the Assessor to rate. The items have been selected and designed following extensive research and consultation with the disability service sector.

The Assessor completing the DMI is asked to assign a rating for each item. The ratings describe the level of assistance that the Supported Employee requires or whether a particular ability, behaviour or need is present.

Remember that the DMI is based on actual assistance recently provided or purchased, not on predictions about the assistance a person may require in the future.

4.2.1   Ratings for the Social and Behavioural, Cognitive, Vocational and Physical Assistance & Personal Care Domains

The *Social and Behavioural Assistance, Cognitive Assistance, Vocational Assistance* and *Physical Assistance and Personal Care* domains all ask the Assessor to consider what level of assistance the ADE has provided over the evidence compilation period to enable the Supported Employee to achieve the work-related abilities listed in the domains. The Assessor is asked to select from the following four rating categories:

Rating Category	Description
No assistance provided	Worker consistently achieved this with no prompts, training, counselling or other support during the past three months
Some assistance provided	Worker required up to three or four prompts, reminders, counselling, additional training sessions, or other support during the past three months
Moderate level of assistance provided	On average, worker required weekly prompts, reminders, counselling or training sessions, or other support during the past three months
High level of assistance provided	Worker required frequent (e.g. daily) prompts, reminders, counselling, training, or other support during the past three months

Note: If an item is not applicable, select the 'No assistance required box'.

Assessors are then asked to select one of the four rating categories that best fits the Supported Employee's support requirements, against each item in each domain. Unless otherwise specified, Assessors can *only select one rating category for each item*.

Please note that these definitions may vary slightly from domain to domain, so you should read them each time.

The context for assessment of each item is the Supported Employee's current or intended job. For each item the Assessor should consider what level of support is required to enable the Supported Employee to achieve the specified ability, skill or characteristic in the current or intended job.

It is recognised that not all Supported Employees will fit neatly into a rating category. Assessors need to select the rating category that most closely describes the support required by the Supported Employee over the evidence compilation period.

4.2.2 Ratings for the Communication Domain

The *Communication Abilities (A)* domain contains five items; two have further sub categories as shown below:

- understanding language
  - understands complex language;
  - understands simple language; and
  - difficulty understanding language.
- expressive language
  - uses complex language;
  - uses simple language; and
  - difficulty speaking.
- speaks a language other than English
- hearing

Each of the above items provides a selection of descriptive ratings. Assessors need to select the rating that *most closely describes the worker's abilities* as observed and demonstrated over the evidence compilation period.

4.2.3 Ratings for the Workplace Environment and Other Assistance Domains

In the *Workplace Environment Assistance* and *Other Assistance* domains, the Assessor must consider whether the ADE has provided or funded any of the listed types of support to the Supported Employee. It is possible to select *Yes* against all the types of assistance or just some depending on the support provided. Assessors are not limited to only choosing *Yes* to one of these questions.

If none of the types of support have been provided, the Assessor should select the *No* rating against all the questions in the domains.

4.2.4 Ratings for the Special Assistance Domain

The five items in the *Special Assistance* domain requires a selection from an expanded rating to indicate whether the support was required and also to indicate *how often* the assistance has been required by selecting from one of the answers provided below:

- *No – Not Applicable*
- *Yes – Not Required in the past 3 months* (select this answer if the worker has required special assistance, but it was outside of the 3 month period)
- *Once in the past three months (10 minutes)*
- *Once in the past three months (10 and 30 minutes)*
- *Once in the past 3 months (>30 minutes)*
- *More than once in past 3 months (10 minutes)*
- *More than once in past 3 months (10 and 30 minutes)*
- *More than once in past 3 months (>30 minutes)*
- *At least once each week (<10 minutes)*
- *At least once each week (10 and 30 minutes)*
- *At least one each week (>30 minutes)*

If special assistance has been required on more than one occasion, the length of time that support was needed should be averaged. For example, if support was required on two occasions during the evidence compilation period, for a duration of 10 minutes on the first occasion and 40 minutes on the second occasion, the average would be 25 minutes (i.e. 10 + 40 = 50/2 = 25). The Assessor should therefore select the *More than once in past 3 months (10 and 30 minutes).*

4.2.5 Ratings for the Variable Assistance Domain

The *Variable Assistance* domain contains three parts:

Part (a) concerns the *frequency* of variation in the Supported Employee's support needs and the Assessor is asked to select one of five rating categories which range from *fairly stable and consistent* to *varying continuously.*

Part (b) involves the magnitude or size of fluctuations in support needs. There are three rating options: *negligible, minor* and *major.*

Part (c) asks if there is any evidence (such as a letter from a psychiatrist) within the past two years that the Supported Employee has an episodic condition. The response is a simple *Yes/No.*

4.2.6 Frequently asked questions

Q: What if I can't find an exact match between the Supported Employee's assistance needs and the rating choices given in the DMI question?

Example:
During the evidence compilation period prior to Completion of the DMI, the employer reports that they have had to remind the Supported Employee not to swear when something goes wrong in the workplace, for example, when the Supported Employee drops an object. This has happened on three occasions. The Supported Employee otherwise speaks clearly and appropriately.

The *Other Language Use Issues* item in the Communication domain offers the following ratings:

  i.   *Has echolalic speech (i.e. repeats what others say), rushed speech (i.e. talks rapidly) or speaks continuously;*
  ii. *Has speech that is disorganized, lacks meaning or doesn't make sense to the listener;*
  iii. *Is reluctant to speak in work-related situations;*
  iv. *Uses offensive language at least once per week in the work or work preparation setting; or*
  v.   *Not applicable - has none of these language use issues.*

The DMI Guidelines require the Assessor to select the rating category that *most closely describes* the Supported Employee's abilities as observed and demonstrated over the evidence compilation period.

In the case outlined above:

Ratings i), ii) and iii) are not the correct choice as this Supported Employee has clear speech that does make sense and is otherwise appropriate. There is no evidence that the Supported Employee is reluctant to speak in work-related situations.
Rating iv) is also not appropriate as the Supported Employee's inappropriate or offensive language is not occurring at least once per week.
Rating v) is the category that *most closely describes* this Supported Employee's other language use issues.

Rating v) is not an *exact* match for this Supported Employee but it is the *closest* match of the 5 rating categories available.

Q: Why can't the DMI provide more categories so that an exact match is possible, or allow for an 'other' category or written comments in cases where the Supported Employee's abilities do not match the categories provided?

The DMI is an administrative tool completed for many Supported Employees by many different service outlets. This means that the instrument needs to be practical in its length and complexity. The addition of extra rating categories to cater for all of the individual variations in ability and support needs could result in an instrument that was so long as to be unviable for service outlets to administer for all of their Supported Employees.

Due to the large number of DMIs that will be processed, the scoring of the instruments must be done electronically. It would not be possible or reliable to manually and individually determine what score an '*other*' category or a written explanation of a Supported Employee's abilities should receive.

Q: What if the Supported Employee has an episodic condition (in this case a mental illness)? As far as we are aware, the Supported Employee has been fine over the past three months, but based on what is known of their previous history, we think it is likely that they will need counselling or other support for this illness at some time during the next year. What can we select on the DMI to make sure they get some points for this? We don't want to be under-funded for this Supported Employee.

The Special Assistance domain asks: *Does this person require any of the following types of special assistance in the workplace or preparation setting*:

Option d) is: *Counselling or other intervention for severe mental health-related episodes such as severe stress, anxiety, panic attack or delusions*.

The rating of *Yes – Not required in the past 3 months* can be selected for this example as long as the service outlet has some form of supporting evidence to indicate that the Supported Employee is currently suffering from a mental-health condition. An example of supporting evidence could be a letter from a doctor or psychiatrist that contains information which is clearly applicable to the Supported Employee at this point in time, or documented evidence regarding the provision of this type of support to the Supported Employee by the service outlet.

In this case, the Supported Employee has not required any counselling or other intervention for his/her mental illness in the past three months, so the *not required in the past three months* category must be selected.

Remember that the DMI is based on *actual* support recently provided, not on predictions about the support a person may require in the future.

Option e) in the Special Assistance domain (i.e. *Counselling for less acute issues such as grief, behavioural issues*) may apply similarly for this Supported Employee.

The Variable Assistance domain provides a further option to record episodic or fluctuating assistance needs for this Supported Employee.

If actual behaviour does change in the future requiring additional support, it may be appropriate for the organisation to initiate a DMI Reassessment at that time based on the DMI Reassessments Triggers Table (Appendix 1).

4.3   How is the DMI Scored?

The DMI is scored electronically using a computer program, i.e. the scoring is fully automated and there is no manual processing or interpretation of the ratings selected by Assessors.

Each assessment item in the DMI receives an individual unweighted (raw) score.

This raw score is determined by the rating category selected by the Assessor for that item.

An *item weight* is applied to each item score. These item weights are set for each item in recognition that some items will have a greater impact on employment assistance than others.

Each *domain* also has a weighting in order to achieve appropriate relativity between the domains.

The score for each assessment item equals the raw item score multiplied by item weight multiplied by domain weight. These item scores are then added to produce the total DMI score.

The raw scores, item weights and domain weights are kept confidential so that the assessment system remains fair and equitable for all providers.

Appendix 1 - DMI Reassessment Triggers Table

Trigger	Evidence
DSS-initiated DMI Reassessment: A DMI Reassessment directed by DSS in writing.	A copy of the written direction by DSS.
Significant change in the worker's health status, stamina or physical capacity affecting work performance or hours of work that results in changed support requirements.	Documentation from an independent health professional demonstrating the onset of the health condition and describing the medium or long-term impact on attendance and/or ability to continue work at the required standard.
Significant changes in disability affecting work performance or hours of work that results in changed support requirements.	Documentation from an independent health professional describing the change in disability. and Documented observations by the Organisation demonstrating the impact on work performance and support requirements.
Significant change in personal circumstances affecting work performance or hours of work that results in changed support requirements.	Self-reported information from the Supported Employee, and/or a communication from a carer, advocate or family member, documented by the Organisation, is preferable. and Documented observations from the Organisation that demonstrate the impact on support requirements. These observations must indicate that the support was not accounted for in the previous DMI assessment.