Guidelines for Assessment Environments
Education Leadership Council (ELC)

When it comes to PSIA-AASI assessment environments, the term “feedback” is difficult to define how it is applied. What it is, what is acceptable, and what it is not, are not universally agreed upon. When considering feedback in the assessment environment the goal is to create a consistent assessment environment between assessors, events, and regions.

Feedback: *the transmission of evaluative or corrective information about an action, event, or process to the original or controlling source.*

This document's purpose is to provide clarity (guardrails/guidelines) from the Education Leadership Council (ELC) on the types of verbal and nonverbal communication acceptable during assessments. This document provides guidelines and outlines behaviors for assessors while delivering the on-snow portion of the assessment. In the assessment environment, feedback relative to the above definition will be offered after the on-snow assessment (at results). During the on-snow assessment, communication from assessors to candidates should follow the below guidelines.

In general, Assessor behaviors during the assessment will be:

- general encouragement/motivation
- clarifying and modifying activities and outcomes
- procedural or technical support
- health or safety-related

Utilizing these guidelines will assist in upholding the national standards' integrity and ensure candidates receive more consistent assessment experiences across regions. The ELC supports the efforts of each task force to create the assessment process and stresses the importance of assessors adhering to these established procedures. Ensuring staff can effectively set up activities and verify candidate understanding is essential for delivering fair and consistent assessments.

During assessment-based certificate or “specialist” programs, these same guidelines apply during the assessment portions of the credential.

Best Practices for Assessors During the Exam Day

- **Equitable Treatment:** Ensure all candidates receive the level of interaction and support needed from assessors to maintain fairness.
- **Clear Communication:** Communicate clearly and professionally. When possible, use simple, non-technical language. Focus on communication geared toward procedure rather than performance (what to do, rather than how to do it) which allows you to evaluate candidates within the ACs.
- **Confidentiality:** Respect and maintain the confidentiality of candidates' performance and results until they are officially announced.

Acceptable Assessor - Candidate Communication (To Do)

- **General Encouragement and Motivation**
    - **Positive Atmosphere:** Encourage candidates by creating a supportive environment.
      Examples: introductions, warm-up runs, sharing outline for the day, foreshadowing the next activity. Generally creating an atmosphere conducive to questions for clarification.
    - **Motivational Statements:** Use neutral, uplifting comments that apply to everyone.
      Examples: "Thank you all for choosing to seek further certification." "We commend the time and effort you've put in training for this." "Great effort everyone."
- **Clarifications and Reminders**
    - **Instructions and Guidelines:** Provide reminders about the exam process, schedule, and expectations.
      Example: "You have 10 minutes left in your teaching segment."
    - **Answering Procedural Questions:** Respond to queries about the exam logistics, not performance specifics.
      Example: "Can we warm up before this part?" would be answered, but not "How did I do in the last task?"
    - **Assessor Questioning:** When an assessment activity allows for an interview with the candidates, use probing questions to clarify and/or verify the candidates' understanding and knowledge to determine the score and rationalize feedback. Use relevant LO/ACs as a guide to stay on track and guide the candidates to missing pieces for evaluation using neutral questioning.
      Example: "You mentioned that the center mass relationship at the finish of the turn contributed to the ability to make effective edging movements; tell me more about how those things relate in the skier/rider you observed." "You stated that

you would have the skier/rider do xxx activity to help them. Why would that activity be helpful to this particular skier/rider?"

- **Technical or Procedural Support**
    - **Addressing Technical Issues:** Offer help if there are issues with equipment or materials.
      Example: "If anyone has trouble with your gear, please let us know."
      "Reminder that assessment forms will be delivered via email by "x" pm if you aren't sure how that works, please catch one of us to explain"

    - **Procedural Assistance:** Guiding non-performance-related aspects.
      Example: Which run an activity will be done on, where to go next, how long they have to observe each other or teach the group, and what the MA process is.
      "You can use whatever process you like to share what you observe with the skier/ rider. You can narrate as they come down, gather your thoughts and then share, or a mix; whatever works best for you."

- **Health and Safety**
    - **Well-being Checks:** Ensure candidates are physically and emotionally okay.
      Example:"Do you need to take a water break?" "Are you too cold to perform?"

- **Non-Specific Feedback**
    - **Group Feedback on Common Issues:** If many candidates make a similar error, you can provide general advice without pointing out specific individuals.
      Example: "The activity was designed to highlight speed control. Please show your ability to control your speed in this next set of turns."

    - **General Observations:** Offer insights that can help all candidates equally without disclosing specific evaluations.
      Example: "Let's do another set of short turns; this time let's all focus on having higher edge angles for this set of short turns"

    - **Subsets of the group:** If subsets of the group need to be assessed on different outcomes within an activity, they can be asked to perform the activity with different outcomes. A subset must always consists of more than 1 candidate.
      Example: "Group 1 will be focused on tactical performance while Group 2 will be focused on fundamental movements."

Unacceptable Assessor - Candidate Communication (Don't do)

- **Performance Evaluation**
    - **Scores or Rankings:** Do not indicate how a candidate is performing relative to others or in terms of grades.
      Examples of unacceptable communication: "You scored high on the last activity." "You're in the top three so far."

    - **Specific Critiques or Praise:** Avoid giving detailed feedback on individual tasks before the end-of-day results.

Examples of unacceptable communications: "You nailed your teaching presentation." "Your stated cause and effect relationship was inaccurate."

- **Comparisons:** Do not compare candidates against each other or reveal any performance-related insights to the candidates.
  Examples of unacceptable communications: "You're doing better than others." "Your edging skill is not to the standard."

- **Influential:** Ensure that feedback does not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any candidate.
  Examples of unacceptable communications: "You don't need to worry about ___." "You need to show me ___ if you want to meet the standard."

- **Disruptive or Distracting Feedback**
  - **Interruptions During Performance:** Refrain from interrupting candidates to provide feedback while they are actively engaged in their activity.
    Examples of unacceptable communications: commenting on their technique or approach during a presentation or performance.

  - **"What am I thinking?" Questions**: Avoid asking questions designed to elicit specific answers reflecting your personal bias rather than gathering information relevant to the assessment criteria.
    Examples of unacceptable communications: "What is the most important skill when you are doing "x" activity?", "Why do you think we decided to do this activity?"

  - **Unsolicited Feedback:** Avoid giving feedback the candidate did not ask for during the exam unless it is a general observation applicable to all or group subsets (2 or more people).
    Examples of unacceptable communications: "Jane, just keep your focus on doing ___." "Steve, that was a great set of turns."

- **Emotional or Personal Feedback**
  - **Emotionally Charged Reactions:** Do not react with visible frustration, disappointment, or excessive enthusiasm that could influence the candidate's confidence or mood.
    Examples of unacceptable communications: sighing loudly when a mistake is made, rolling eyes, cheering, speaking about a candidate to your fellow examiner within earshot of them or anyone else in the group.

  - **Personal Comments:** Avoid any remarks about the candidate's appearance, demeanor, or personal characteristics unless they are strictly related to the performance requirements.

By following these guidelines, assessors can create a fair, supportive, and professional examination environment for all candidates. If you have any specific scenarios or need further clarification, please ask.