

Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning

September 2000

Publication code: A1030

Published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority, Hanover House, 24 Douglas Street, Glasgow G2 7NQ, and Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1LE

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1: Overview

1.1 Introduction

This document provides guidance for those responsible for assessing and quality assuring SQA qualifications which are offered through open or distance learning. It should also be useful to those involved in designing this type of provision.

Open learning and *distance learning* are generic terms which cover a wide range of flexible learning strategies. We at SQA recognise flexible learning approaches as important modes of delivery for both internally-assessed and externally-assessed SQA qualifications.

Open learning programmes can involve drop-in centres, home study, work placements, day release, and evening, weekend or summer classes. Support for and assessment of candidates could incorporate a variety of approaches, such as flexipacks, timetabled tutorials, telephone support, tutor-marked assignments, and supervised workplace assessment. Candidates taking these programmes might have chosen the open learning route because they prefer to be responsible for organising some of their own learning and assessment.

Distance learning programmes can make use of some of the same resources as open learning, but they are different in the sense that candidates living outwith the locality of your centre may not be able to attend tutorials, or even weekend or summer classes. Distance learning candidates, especially those studying in geographically isolated locations, may choose the distance learning route because of the lack of alternative local opportunities rather than for convenience or out of a desire to shape their own learning programmes.

In this guide we make no real distinction between open learning and distance learning, but there is a difference in emphasis — distance learning is likely to present more challenges in terms of assessment and quality assurance.

Authentication, as with many of the topics discussed in this guide, is not an issue that relates solely to open or distance learning. If you are responsible for a programme for which candidates carry out much of their work, such as project work, outwith the centre, you will be concerned to ensure that evidence submitted is the candidates' own. However, open learning programmes, and especially distance learning programmes, generally involve fewer opportunities for assessors and candidates to meet face-to-face. This means you will have to use alternative forms of communication to create opportunities for assessors to satisfy themselves as to the authenticity of their candidates' work.

ICT is increasingly being used to support flexible learning programmes. It can offer benefits in enhanced flexibility, authentication and security, and can also be used to make communication, delivery, administration and assessment systems more robust. On the other hand, access to the Internet also makes plagiarism easier, and if you are

using electronic systems for remote assessment you will also have to consider the risk of impersonation. An ideal flexible learning programme might be one which balances the freedoms and potential of new technologies with tried and tested flexible learning and quality assurance approaches. Often, the ideal programme will retain some degree of personal contact between assessor and candidates, and among candidates taking the qualification.

1.2 Principles of assessment for open and distance learning

Assessment by open and distance learning should be no less valid, reliable or practicable than assessment for qualifications delivered by the conventional route. The principles of assessment are the same.

Validity

Assessment instruments should be appropriate to purpose, contain clearly-defined assessment criteria, ensure coverage of the skills and knowledge in the qualification, and be capable of generating evidence appropriate for the Units and Outcomes to be assessed.

Identifying or creating assessment instruments for open and distance learning can be challenging, especially where observation of candidate performance is the most valid method of assessment, but assessors are not in direct contact with candidates. In these situations you may have to choose or design assessment instruments and materials that can be used by people other than the assessor (see *assessment supervisors* in Section 3, *Authentication*).

Reliability

To be reliable, assessment decisions should be based on evidence generated by valid assessment instruments that are consistently applied over time, across a range of candidates and assessors, and in different situations and contexts.

It is important that the qualifications you offer by open and distance learning are as reliable, and seen to be as reliable, as those you offer through other modes. To ensure the credibility of flexible learning provision, you must be satisfied that assessment decisions are as consistent as possible. The assessment instruments you use should be subject to internal checking, and anyone who assists the assessors in the assessment process (such as invigilators or *assessment supervisors*) should be provided with clear instructions on the conditions for assessment which apply in any given situation. Section 3, *Authentication*, discusses the roles of these individuals, and Section 5 on *Approval, Monitoring and Auditing* discusses internal moderation.

Practicability ...

For assessment to be practicable it must be capable of being smoothly administered, and it must be cost-effective. Adequate resources, time, and communication channels must be available to ensure that assessment and re-assessment can take place at a time and in a place that is appropriate for candidates and for centres.

Open and distance learning will probably present you with more challenges than other delivery modes, in terms of practicability, because it may mean you have to involve other centres and/or individuals in the assessment process. To meet our requirements for quality assurance, you must be able to show that your internal quality system can extend to encompass all the various assessment arrangements, locations and individuals involved. These situations can create logistical problems and solutions must be workable and cost-effective for all involved.

... and fairness

The need for fairness is implicit in each of these principles. In all learning and assessment situations, candidates have a right to access to: support from a tutor; learning and assessment materials; equipment and resources; and assessment opportunities. In flexible learning situations, and especially those where candidates are studying remotely, it is important not to underestimate the amount of planning and resources required to provide these things. Section 2 on *Internal Assessment* and Section 4 on *External Assessment* raise some of these issues.

1.3 SQA quality assurance for open and distance learning

We publish a series of guides to explain our requirements for internal and external quality assurance of SQA qualifications. Our quality criteria are detailed in *Quality Assurance: Principles, Elements and Criteria* (A0798, December 1998).

Our quality assurance processes require centres to provide evidence that there are systems in place to deliver and assess qualifications in a way that meets the quality criteria, and maintains national standards. Although no distinction is made in the quality criteria between the modes by which qualifications are delivered, we do expect to see quality systems adapted and managed to meet the requirements of the different types of provision you decide to offer. This means your centre's quality system may have to encompass arrangements for qualifications offered by full-time or part-time attendance (including day or evening provision), workplace assessment, and open learning and distance learning (including provision offered to candidates overseas).

If you wish to be confident about the credibility of your flexible learning provision, we have to be confident that your candidates:

- ◆ have access to information about the programme, to learning and assessment materials, and to equipment and resources

- ◆ are clear about communication channels with the centre and are adequately supported
- ◆ have access to opportunities for internal assessment by the centre — scheduling of assessment and re-assessment should be appropriate for candidates
- ◆ have access to opportunities for external assessment by SQA — centres are responsible to arranging this in accordance with our requirements
- ◆ submit only their own work for internal and external assessment

The flexible learning environment is constantly changing — responding to local, national and international initiatives, and to advances in technology — and it is important to interpret quality criteria in this context. For example, if your centre offers an ICT-supported qualification, you could decide to carry out some of the assessments on-line. If so, we would be interested in how you prepare candidates for assessment, how you authenticate or invigilate their assessment evidence (where required), and how you re-assess (where required).

Some centres now offer SQA qualifications to candidates living outwith the UK, and we expect to see how their quality systems can be extended to ensure that, for example, candidate induction and support is sufficient, internal moderation systems are effective, and access for SQA external moderators is readily available.

We use the SQA quality assurance procedures to monitor these types of situation. Section 5 provides more detail on how this operates through our approval, systems verification and auditing procedures.

2: Internal assessment

SQA-approved centres are responsible for the assessment and internal quality assurance of internally-assessed qualifications. This includes responsibility for:

- ◆ design and management of programmes — access to assessment (including assessment of practical skills)
- ◆ selection and/or production of assessment instruments
- ◆ using National Assessment Bank items (NABs)
- ◆ interpreting conditions for assessment (closed-book assessments and controlled conditions)
- ◆ supervising and authenticating
- ◆ managing procedures for revision and reassessment
- ◆ using on-line assessment
- ◆ candidate support and communication
- ◆ internal moderation

Each area of responsibility is discussed below.

2.1 Design and management of programmes

Your centre is responsible for programming each qualification in a way that guarantees that candidates have access to resources required, and to sufficient time with their assessors. Qualifications delivered outwith the centre, especially those delivered by distance learning, will need additional planning if each candidate's assessment needs are to be met.

If you are designing open or distance learning programmes, you are likely to plan these to suit individual candidates' needs and timescales rather than a group's, your centre's, or SQA's, requirements. Some centres do this by drawing up individual learning and assessment contracts for each open or distance learning candidate. This ensures that learning and assessment materials and strategies are appropriate, that assessment is task-centred and takes place when candidates are ready to be assessed, and that candidates are able to benefit as much as possible from the flexibility in the programme (and any new technologies available).

Electronic learning management systems are often used to support flexible learning programmes. These are software systems which each perform a variety of functions. Most will help with designing assessment instruments, marking candidates' work, providing feedback to candidates, compiling candidate profiles, and scheduling programme delivery to coincide with stages in the candidate's development. A

number of commercial products of this nature are available, and some centres design their own systems.

Considerable planning will be required: you will need to allow time for evening, part-time and non-local candidates to cover the programme content, undertake internal assessment and repeat assessments, and prepare for any external assessment. To provide these opportunities, you might consider extending the programme over a longer period of time than would normally be the case. The proposed second external assessment diets for National Courses in some subjects, for example, might offer opportunities for candidates to work towards a Higher or Intermediate Course over an eighteen month period.

With distance learning it may also be difficult to cover all aspects of the programme. Programming some assessment activities, such as those involving group work, will need additional planning if candidates who study from home or from their places of work are to participate.

Assessment activities which involve the observation of practical or process skills, or performance, can also present logistical problems. The most valid way to assess these types of activity is likely to be by observation. Often, units involving such activities will also require candidates to access specific pieces of equipment and, if your candidates cannot attend the centre, it is your responsibility to make alternative arrangements to allow assessments to take place. Examples include:

- ◆ weekend or summer assessment events where practical tasks could be grouped for assessment
- ◆ arranging for candidates to attend other approved centres to carry out the practical tasks under supervision
- ◆ in some circumstances, where other options are not possible, assessors may be able to secure the commitment of other appropriately qualified individuals, such as candidates' employment supervisors, to supervise practical aspects of the qualification (using materials provided by the assessor) and assist with gathering evidence (see Section 3, *Authentication*)
- ◆ alternative assessment instruments and approaches that are better suited to the flexible learning environment could be explored (assessment instruments are discussed next)

2.2 Selection and/or production of assessment instruments

SQA Unit specifications outline the evidence required and provide information on assessment approaches. For National Units, we provide exemplar assessment instruments in the form of National Assessment Bank items (NABs). Assessment exemplars are also available for some Higher National Units.

In the past, Unit specifications have not provided information specific to flexible learning. However, the revised Higher National Unit specification does contain a statement on the suitability of the Unit for open and distance learning. Some will also contain advice on ways of delivering the Unit through these routes. If you are offering a Unit by open or distance learning, you are responsible for interpreting the information provided in the Unit specification in a way that suits the delivery mode. This means you must ensure that you devise or select assessment instruments that will allow candidates to generate evidence of the type and amount required, whatever the candidate's location or circumstances.

Where a Unit specification recommends an assessment instrument and you decide to use an alternative, it must be comparable to the recommended one in terms of its validity and reliability. For example, you may be able to use simulations, in some circumstances, as alternatives to real demonstrations of practical or process skills. These are often a valuable way of assessing candidates who are not local to the centre, but they must ensure coverage of the skills and knowledge prescribed for the original assessment activity. The conditions for assessment must also be of equal rigour to those described in the Unit specification. If you are assessing an SVQ Unit, you should check the national standards for guidance on the use of simulation.

Projects are also a useful way of incorporating practical and/or process evidence. If you decide to use a project, you should tailor the project's objectives to make sure candidates are required to use the practical or process skills outlined for the activity. The project evidence should also include authenticated records of the necessary skills being used. Assessors should ensure that candidates are able to substantiate this evidence, through questioning or through supplementary assessment activities.

If there are assessment activities which are designed to assess knowledge, for example a series of short tests, you may be able to integrate these to create a single, coherent assessment event that is easier to timetable for open or distance learning candidates. One constraint on this, though, is that for National Courses, the assessment evidence for at least one *complete* Unit must be available by the end of March each year — this is for external moderation.

All the assessment instruments you use for flexible learning programmes should, as with assessment materials for other types of provision, be internally-moderated in your centre before use — we do offer a prior moderation service for assessment instruments for some qualifications. Internal moderation is discussed later in this section.

2.3 Using National Assessment Bank items (NABs)

We provide assessment instruments for National Units — National Assessment Bank items (NABs). NABs are usually designed to be holistic, but can sometimes comprise a series of Outcome assessments. This type of NAB might be less suitable if you are delivering the Unit by open or distance learning, especially where the Outcome assessments require supervision and the candidate is not able to attend the centre. In these circumstances you could consider integrating the Outcome assessments, where

this is appropriate to the skills and knowledge to be assessed. You should ensure that the integrated activities can generate sufficient evidence to allow candidates to satisfy the requirements of each Outcome, and that the conditions for assessment can be met.

We offer a prior moderation service for centre-devised assessment instruments which are being used as alternatives to NABs. This is a service rather than a requirement, although we do strongly advise you to use it. Where a Unit assessment embeds assessment of Core Skill components, any assessment instruments used as alternatives to the NAB, or which makes significant amendments to the NAB, *must* be submitted to us for prior moderation before being used.

2.4 Interpreting conditions for assessment

We publish *Conditions* for assessment to ensure that the assessment process for each qualification is fair and that national standards are maintained — you can generally find information on *Conditions* for internal assessment in Unit specifications. For National Qualifications, you can also find information in National Assessment Bank (NAB) items.

If you are responsible for the quality assurance of a specific qualification or programme, you should ensure that the way internal assessments are carried out within your centre is consistent — in different situations, with different candidates, and with different assessors. We will check that your assessment judgements are consistent across your centre, and that they meet national standards, in the external moderation process (see section 5 for more information).

Some assessments, such as written tests, are *closed-book*. This simply means that candidates should not be allowed to access resources, or should be restricted as to the resources and information they are allowed to access. The *Conditions* for closed-book assessment (for both internal and external assessment) generally say that it should take place in *controlled conditions*. This means that you should make arrangements to ensure that each candidate has access only to the information, resources and equipment prescribed for the activity, that communication between candidates is restricted, and that the layout of the room and the duration of the assessment meets the stated requirements. You will generally have to ensure that this type of assessment is supervised (invigilated).

It can be difficult to ensure similar assessment conditions for your candidates who attend the centre and those who follow flexible learning routes to the same qualification, especially for those operating from a distance. Where candidates are not local to the centre, or are even living overseas, you should ensure that everyone involved in the assessment process is informed about the *Conditions* for assessment for each activity. Any breaches of these *Conditions* should be reported to you. If you decide to ask someone (other than the assessor) to administer a closed-book assessment on your behalf, you should ensure that the security of the assessment instrument is maintained by sending it directly to that individual. He or she should:

- ◆ keep the assessment instrument and instructions secure until the appropriate time
- ◆ issue them to candidates when required
- ◆ oversee the assessment process to ensure the conditions for assessment are upheld
- ◆ retrieve the assessment instrument and candidate responses at the end of the prescribed time
- ◆ return these to the centre

(There is more about the role and responsibilities of such individuals in Section 3 *Authentication*.)

National Assessment Bank items sometimes include closed-book assessments. NABs are **confidential** assessments. If you are using NABs you will be responsible for maintaining their confidentiality and you should be confident that other individuals involved in the delivery or assessment of the qualification are aware of the need to keep them secure and return them to you after use.

2.5 Supervising and authenticating

Where candidates are not local to your centre, and assessors are not likely to be able to oversee all of the assessment activities, it is your centre's responsibility to ensure that a responsible person can supervise assessments and testify that the *Conditions* for assessment are adhered to on each occasion. Section 3 of this guide discusses some of these roles and responsibilities in detail.

Various people can be used to support the delivery and assessment of open and distance learning programmes, and to assist with the authentication of candidate work. Various terms are also used to describe these individuals and the functions they perform. Wherever possible in this guide we use *assessment supervisor* as a general term to describe these types of individual.

It is important that candidates are aware of their responsibility to submit only evidence that is their own, and also that they are aware of any activities they will be expected to take part in for authentication purposes. You should explain the authenticating activities to candidates at the outset of the open or distance learning programme, such as their obligations to answer questions on their work or to produce sections of their written work in supervised conditions.

2.6 Managing procedures for revision and re-assessment

The principles of re-assessment (internal assessment) are the same for candidates working in a flexible learning environment as for candidates following programmes offered in the conventional way, namely:

- ◆ re-assessment should follow revision (where required)
- ◆ re-assessment should take place when candidates are ready
- ◆ candidates are entitled to access their assessment evidence (including test papers) for revision

Guidance on re-assessment for National Units recommends one re-assessment opportunity per Unit — or two, but only in exceptional circumstances.

Re-assessment may require more planning for open or distance learning candidates, especially when they are not living in the locality of your centre and the re-assessment activities have to be supervised. Assuming candidates do not request re-assessment immediately after the failed assessment attempt, you may be able to group and programme re-assessment activities to take place at a time and place convenient for both you and the candidates.

Candidates are entitled to access their assessment evidence, including test papers, for re-assessment. Ideally this would be issued, discussed, and retrieved without the material leaving the centre. However, where candidates are not living locally, you should copy the assessment evidence and send it to them, with requests for the material to be returned to you after use. You should not send original material since this may be needed for assessment appeals or external moderation.

In some circumstances assessors will need to use new assessment instruments for re-assessment, depending on the purpose of the assessment and the type of assessment activity. In general, assessment instruments focusing on knowledge and understanding should not be re-used with the same candidates — and this is certainly the case for assessment instruments designed for confidential, closed-book activities.

2.7 Using on-line assessment

Assessment instruments designed for on-line assessment must be as valid and reliable as those designed for programmes delivered through attendance at the centre. If you decide to use computer-assisted assessment (CAA), the assessment instruments should be appropriate to the skill or knowledge to be assessed. For example, on-line multiple choice tests could not be used as substitutes for observation of practical activities.

If you are using CAA, it is likely that the tests will be generated from a bank of questions. This is important because, where different candidates are being asked to

take tests at different times, the item bank would be required to generate tests for each assessment event that were both equivalent and secure.

Where several candidates are taking closed-book CAA tests at the same time, you should ensure that they are not able to confer. You may be required to:

- ◆ arrange the computers to ensure that candidates cannot see each others' screens
- ◆ randomise the order of the questions to reduce the likelihood that any two candidates will be working on-screen on the same question at the same time

The computer applications used should require candidates to log their personal details at the outset of the test for security, and should record each candidate's performance as they progress through the test. Good practice used in conventional assessment should be applied to the on-line environment:

- ◆ candidates should be prepared for assessments in advance, and should be familiar with the format of the assessment and the equipment to be used
- ◆ the conditions for assessment should be explained
- ◆ if an on-line assessment is to be timed, start and finish times should be set in advance and arrangements should be in place to ensure all candidates have the same amount of time to work on the assessments
- ◆ the assessment instruments used should be valid and of a quality that will allow all the relevant types of skill and knowledge to be assessed
- ◆ where assessment instruments are designed to sample across a Unit (or Course) they should include all the relevant types of skill and content in the sampling (eg practical skills, process skills, understanding and problem solving)
- ◆ candidates' responses should be held in a secure environment (back-up systems should be used to capture responses in case the computer systems fail)
- ◆ arrangements should be made for authentication or supervision (if required)
- ◆ arrangements should be made for re-assessment (including the provision of alternative assessment instruments, if required)
- ◆ arrangements should be made for candidates with special assessment requirements — ICT can be beneficial to some of these candidates, but can present disadvantages to others (eg some candidates with eyesight problems may not perform well in computer-based tests)

2.8 Candidate support and communication

Support

Providing support for candidates following a flexible learning programme can be demanding. The level of support required will vary from one candidate to the next, but it is frequently the case that the majority of the available tutor support will be spent on

a small proportion of candidates who need it most. You may find that demand from these candidates eases off as the programme develops and they become more confident. It is important, though, to allocate sufficient time to support these candidates, especially at the start of a programme, and to ensure that other candidates on the programme are not neglected.

Assessors' time will also be required for on-going maintenance of the system.

Communication

In an ICT environment, e-mail and on-line conferencing can provide open or distance learning candidates with easier access to their assessors, and assessors can use the technology to communicate with a wider range of candidates than would normally be possible in programmes which are not supported by ICT.

Electronic systems can facilitate this type of communication between candidates and assessors. For example, you may find that one way of managing candidate support and communication effectively is to gather *frequently asked questions* (FAQs) and answers and compile a FAQ file for circulation to all candidates following the programme. A variation on this would be to e-mail a candidate's enquiry and his or her response to all candidates, provided the information is not confidential.

Tele-conferencing, which is sometimes used in the delivery of modern language programmes, is also an effective way of communicating with groups of candidates and allowing them to communicate with and support each other.

For each open and distance learning programme you are responsible for, you should allocate sufficient numbers of assessors to guarantee appropriate support for candidates. The ratio of assessors to candidates that is appropriate will vary from programme to programme and will depend on a number of factors, including whether or not the programme is ICT-supported. Given the wide range of flexible learning programmes being offered, it would be inappropriate for us to specify standard ratios of assessors to candidates — a ratio which is suitable for one programme might be unnecessarily restrictive for another. However, as part of the SQA quality assurance process, our representatives may ask about the open or distance learning programmes offered in your centre and the ratios of assessors to candidates provided for these. See section 5 for more details on quality assurance.

If you are planning a specific flexible learning programme, whether it is to be supported by traditional flexible learning mechanisms or by ICT, you should consider:

- ◆ the mechanisms to be used to support candidates — post, telephone, programmed face-to-face tutorials, e-mail etc
- ◆ the extent to which support via mechanisms such as telephone or e-mail will be available to candidates as and when they require it, or restricted to specific times of day/specific days of the week etc
- ◆ how the support will be managed, and what you will do to facilitate communication and peer support among candidates

2.9 Internal moderation

For internally-assessed qualifications, centres are responsible for ensuring that national standards are applied consistently. This means there has to be agreement within the centre about assessment decisions. This agreement is reached by internal moderation of assessment instruments and by sampling candidates' evidence. There are various ways to approach internal moderation, including using a course team, or appointing a key individual as internal moderator for a learning programme.

Each approach should ensure that:

- ◆ learning and assessment materials are subject to internal checking before use
- ◆ the roles and responsibilities for all those involved in the internal moderation process are clearly documented to show how variation in location and/or timing of assessment have been taken account of
- ◆ assessors' judgements are consistent for candidates working from different locations and in different circumstances
- ◆ assessment judgements are consistent between assessors — assessors should be able to communicate with each other on a regular basis

Where you are offering programmes to candidates who attend the centre regularly, and also to candidates studying by distance learning, you may have to make additional arrangements to ensure that this is possible.

The publication *Putting Assessment Moderation Policy into Operation* (A0892, April, 1999) provides more information on internal moderation.

3: Authentication

To ensure that public confidence in SQA qualifications is maintained, SQA and centres have to be confident about the authenticity of assessment evidence. This means we have to be confident that:

- ◆ candidates entered for a qualification are who they say they are — no impersonation is taking place
- ◆ evidence submitted for assessment by candidates can be authenticated as their own work

At the outset of a flexible learning programme, candidates should be briefed on what constitutes an acceptable level of support, and an acceptable use of materials, and the importance of quoting any sources of information used. During the programme, candidates should be questioned on their work to ensure they have not benefited from improper support from others, or used someone else's material and claimed it as their own.

If you are assessing in an open learning environment you are likely to be familiar, in most cases, with the standard and pattern of each candidate's work. This means that you can be reasonably confident that the candidates are not presenting work that is not their own, or allowing others to impersonate them for the purposes of achieving qualifications. However, to be sure that this is the case, you should develop strategies for authenticating internally-assessed evidence, and should build these into open learning programmes at an early stage. In situations where internally-assessed evidence contributes to the total marks for external assessment, your centre will also be responsible for authenticating this work.

3.1 Authentication methods

Authentication procedures in open and distance learning programmes should be no less rigorous than those used for qualifications delivered in the conventional way. A range of authentication methods can be used — the most widely used are outlined in the internal assessment section of *Guide to Assessment and Quality Assurance for Colleges of Further Education* (A0841, June 1999).

Technological developments also offer opportunities to use new authentication techniques, and these are featuring more and more often in open and distance learning programmes.

When external moderators visit centres to sample candidate evidence, and it emerges that a candidate is following an open or distance learning route to the qualification, the moderators may ask about the 'mix' of authentication tools and techniques used for the qualification. Some of these are discussed below.

3.1.1 Questioning

Questioning candidates on the evidence they produce is one of the most powerful ways of authenticating their work. Some form of questioning is essential (even in conventionally-delivered programmes) where a significant proportion of the candidate's work has been produced without supervision. In project-based assessment, for example, questioning can offer candidates an opportunity to outline the strategies they employed to generate evidence, and to show that they have attained and can apply knowledge and understanding relevant to the project.

There are different approaches to questioning in flexible learning environments. Each form of questioning should allow you to build on your knowledge of your candidates' skills and abilities, and ICT could help you to do this, even where you cannot meet candidates face-to-face. Though ICT can help to minimise the risk of impersonation, the only way you can reach the same level of confidence as with face-to-face questioning is by using authenticators at candidates' locations to verify their identities.

Whatever the approach you use, you should plan and structure the process carefully. Candidates should be briefed in advance on which general areas they are likely to be questioned on — this is especially important where the questioning is not taking place face-to-face because there is a greater chance of misunderstandings occurring. However, it would not be appropriate to be so explicit about topics that they would be able to prepare answers in advance.

Forms of questioning

Viva or personal interview

Where the design of the programme allows you to meet with the candidate face-to-face, at some point, questioning can take place through personal interview.

Telephone interview

You can use telephone contact to support your candidates, and to assess. It is sometimes used for oral assessment in modern languages. If you do not know the candidate well enough to be able to recognise his or her voice, you will need an authenticator to confirm their identity at the outset of the interview.

On-line

E-mail is often employed in flexible learning programmes. *Asynchronised* or 'time-independent' e-mail, where the assessor and the candidate are on-line at different times, can make a valuable contribution to the assessment process. You should not rely on it, though, as the only means of authenticating candidate work, since candidates could, potentially, seek help from other people or from unauthorised sources in preparing answers to your questions.

With *synchronised* or 'real-time' e-mail, where you and the candidate are on-line at the same time, there would be less risk of impersonation taking place. Video-

conferencing equipment (computers with camera systems or web-cams) and audio systems would make this form of questioning even more secure.

If you plan to use e-mail for real-time questioning, you should be aware that candidates may be meeting their own costs for on-line time. You should prepare to present questions that are as precise and clear as possible, and in a format that candidates will be able to answer with short answer responses. You should brief candidates beforehand on the general topics to be covered, on the format of the answers you expect, and on whether you will provide feedback on their answers immediately or at some later point.

The electronic systems you use should record the transactions for quality assurance purposes. This will be especially important if you intend to set questions for discussion by a group of candidates to assess their levels of understanding on a topic. The electronic records you retain will allow you to identify individual candidates' responses, both to your questions and to the comments made by other candidates.

If objective questions, such as multiple choice or true/false questions, would be a more appropriate way of assessing candidates' knowledge and understanding, it would be better to compile a written test which the candidate could take on-line (see *written questioning* below and *on-line assessment* in Section 2).

In any on-line questioning situation where you are concerned about authentication, you would have to ask an authenticator (such as a learning centre manager) to confirm on-line (using a secure password), at the outset of the transaction, that candidates are not in a position to be prompted or use unauthorised sources of information.

Written questioning

Written question papers are a useful way of:

- ◆ confirming candidates' knowledge
- ◆ ensuring coverage of a learning programme
- ◆ preparing candidates for external assessment (where appropriate)
- ◆ generating evidence for estimates and appeals (where appropriate)

Assessment activities involving written questioning generally require some form of supervision, to verify candidates' identities at the outset of the assessment and to ensure that conditions for assessment are maintained during the test. This would be the case whether the assessments were presented as paper tests or as on-line assessments.

3.1.2 Other authentication methods

Using ICT for authentication

There are a number of electronic tools you could use to help with authentication. Products designed to support learning management, sometimes known as ‘electronic learning environments’, can date-stamp work as candidates submit it, and compile candidate profiles. The candidates’ contributions to on-line conferences or e-mail discussions can also be recorded by such systems. In this way you could chart an individual candidate’s development and level of understanding throughout the learning programme, as well as his or her ability to apply knowledge gained to new situations. This in turn could help you reach a level of confidence about the authenticity of the other work the candidate submits for assessment.

If equipment is available, candidates could use video clips, or electronic slide shows with voice-overs, to demonstrate practical or process activities, or performance. This type of evidence also serves to authenticate candidates’ work.

Some ICT tools are emerging which are designed specifically for the purpose of minimising or eliminating opportunities for impersonation. These include: password-controlled systems; handwriting recognition; computer scanning of facial features, the cornea/iris, voice prints, fingerprints and hand patterns; and recognition of patterns of keyboard use. Each of these methods has advantages and disadvantages in terms of expense, accuracy, and acceptability by those who are asked to use them. Currently, the password-controlled system is the one most commonly used to support remote delivery and assessment in education.

ICT tools can reassure you that the candidate is working on the computer at the other end of the connection, but they cannot guarantee that all of the work the candidate submits during the transaction has been produced without help from others. The best authentication options are likely to be those which combine the use of ICT tools with tried-and-tested assessment approaches, such as questioning.

Personal logs and personal statements

Where candidates maintain diaries or logs of planning, developing and reviewing activities, you could use these to contribute to the authentication strategy. A record of the activities undertaken, and any successes and problems experienced, provides a valuable basis for questioning the candidate on his or her work. You could also use personal statements relating to specific activities, or to products the candidates’ generate, to assess their associated knowledge and understanding.

Witness testimony

You may also decide to use witness testimonies as an authentication tool. A witness testimony is a statement written by a responsible person, such as a candidate’s employer or line manager, which confirms that he or she has carried out a task or produced a product. If using witness testimonies, you should ensure that they record what the candidate has demonstrated, how, and in what circumstances. The written statement should also make clear the identity of the witness, his or her relationship to

the candidate, and the extent to which the witness is familiar with the assessment criteria for the activity performed. For example, for SVQ assessment, you might expect the witness to state that he or she is experienced or already qualified in the Unit for which the candidate is being assessed.

If you are using witness testimony for SVQ Units, check with the national standards for specific advice on how this should be done.

Summative assessment under supervision

Even in programmes that are designed to be delivered largely by open and distance learning, it is sometimes possible and desirable to build supervised summative assessment activities into the programme. You could use supervised summative assessment to rule out impersonation risks and avoid having to authenticate evidence. It could be designed to assess a range of skills and knowledge, therefore freeing you from having to consider authentication for these areas of the learning programme. It could take the form of an end-of-Unit test, or an invigilated write-up of the final draft of a report, or the evaluation element of a project-based assessment, or a demonstration of practical skills.

You do not necessarily have to supervise this type of activity yourself. Where a candidate is not living locally to your centre, you could arrange for him or her to attend a centre closer to their home and for an appropriate person to oversee the assessment.

Audio-taped or video-taped evidence

Audio-taped or video-taped evidence is useful in flexible assessment programmes. You could ask candidates to send it to you directly, you can check it to rule out impersonation, and it can provide you with a valuable basis for follow-up questioning. If you are using mentors or authenticators (see below), they may be able to submit comments with the candidate's taped evidence, to authenticate the work and, if appropriate, provide additional information on the context in which the evidence was generated. Where this is available it can make a valuable contribution to the process of judging the assessment evidence.

Signing and counter-signing candidates' work

In SVQ assessment, candidates and assessors are often expected to countersign Unit assessments, and the arrangements for project-based work in National Courses require candidates to declare in writing that the evidence they produce is their own work. Material submitted by candidates should always have their names on it. Where you have asked someone to assist in verifying the identity of your candidates, or you have asked someone to testify that the candidates have carried out particular assessment activities, you should also ask those individuals to sign the candidate's work before it is submitted to you. You are expected to countersign the work, so the authentication strategies you have employed should be sufficiently robust for you to feel confident enough to do this.

In an on-line environment, evidence will be electronically transported and stored, making it less likely to be physically signed by candidates and assessors. You should

ensure that when candidates submit items of evidence in electronic format (and authenticators submit supporting statements) the items can be identified as the work of the candidate in question. You should also ensure that candidates understand that, on submitting the evidence with their name on it, they are in effect signing it off as their own work.

Similarly, when you present candidate evidence (which you have already assessed) for external moderation, you should be prepared in principle to state that, to the best of your knowledge, the evidence is authentic. You should also retain electronic records of the relevant transactions between yourself, candidates, and authenticators.

3.2 Authenticators, invigilators, and mentors (assessment supervisors)

In this guide, we often use the term *assessment supervisor* to describe all individuals who are associated with centres and who assist in the assessment process. The exceptions to this are where we are focusing on one of the specific functions these individuals perform, such as authenticating, invigilating or supporting candidates.

Elsewhere, various terms are used to describe these individuals and the functions they perform. SQA uses *invigilators* to oversee closed-book external assessments; in the National Assessment Bank items (NABs) we refer to the *responsible person* and their role in overseeing supervised internal assessments; and in open learning environments we often speak of *mentors* supporting candidates. These roles and responsibilities overlap to some extent, but generally the functions they perform include:

- ◆ authenticating candidates' work
- ◆ supervising the assessment process
- ◆ supporting candidates

It is important to remember that assessment supervisors do not make formal judgements on candidates' work — assessment is always the responsibility of the assessor. However, in some circumstances, an appropriately qualified or experienced individual could submit information which contributes to your judgement of candidate's work.

Authenticators

The authenticator is sometimes referred to as the *witness* (as in *witness testimony*). Authenticators could be asked to:

- ◆ confirm the candidate's identity (and that no-one has impersonated the candidate in the assessment process)
- ◆ confirm that evidence submitted for assessment is the candidate's own work

Invigilators

The term *invigilator* tends to be used in relation to external assessment.

We are responsible for appointing invigilators for external assessment of SQA qualifications. The role of an SQA invigilator is to:

- ◆ oversee the issue and retrieval of confidential assessment documents
- ◆ oversee assessments (these are generally confidential closed-book activities)
- ◆ observe that the *Conditions* for assessment outlined for the activity are upheld
- ◆ report to us on any incidences of malpractice that arise

In external assessment, invigilators should not be employees of the centre, or have any other connection with the centre.

Where internal assessment takes the form of confidential closed-book activities, your centre is responsible for invigilating the process. In this situation, the supervising person carries out an invigilation role (one of the functions of the *responsible person* in NAB conditions for assessment, for example).

Where the assessment activities do not involve unseen, closed-book conditions, the role becomes more supervisory in nature. For example, with an SVQ candidate, you might ask the candidate's employer to supervise him or her dealing with clients throughout the course of a day. You could also ask the employer to authenticate client records produced by the candidate during the day. The employer would:

- ◆ confirm that the candidate carried out tasks according to the conditions you have specified (ie to meet SVQ standards)
- ◆ confirm that the items of evidence submitted were generated by the candidate

Mentors

The key difference between the roles of *authenticator* or *invigilator* and the role of the *mentor* is that the mentor is generally responsible for providing candidate support. You could use mentors to support the assessment and quality assurance process, but their main function is to guide and encourage candidates as they progress through the qualification. This supporting role can be valuable in situations where a candidate cannot attend the centre regularly, but his or her mentor is located in the same environment (eg a workplace). However, the supporting role can also happen where candidates and mentors are not in close physical proximity — mentors can also support candidates by post, telephone or e-mail.

Where you are using mentors in the assessment and quality assurance process it is important to clarify the different responsibilities required for supporting the candidate and, for example, authenticating his or her work. If both the mentor and the candidate understand this there should be no conflict of interest.

You could ask mentors to carry out several functions on your behalf. For example:

- ◆ advising and supporting candidates
- ◆ gathering evidence for assessment (or helping candidates to do this)
- ◆ authenticating candidate evidence
- ◆ invigilating or supervising assessment activities

None of these functions involve making formal judgements on the achievement or competence of the candidate. This, as we have already said, is always the responsibility of the assessor. (Teachers/lecturers may, of course, include mentoring in their range of approaches, and may also be the assessor.)

3.3 Operational issues

3.3.1 Identifying the authentication functions required for the programme

If you are designing an open learning programme or, in particular, a distance learning programme, you should consider what is needed to support the candidate and ensure the security of the assessment process. This will inform your decision on whether or not assessment supervisors are required and, if they are, what functions are required of them. It may be that your established quality assurance arrangements are robust enough to encompass the delivery and assessment of the qualification by distance learning. The final decision on what is needed will depend on:

- ◆ the nature of the skills and knowledge to be assessed
- ◆ the *Conditions* of assessment attached to the Units within the qualification
- ◆ individual candidates' situations

Where assessment supervisors are needed, these factors will also inform your decisions on:

- ◆ communication between you and assessment supervisors
- ◆ providing support for assessment supervisors

Examples of using assessment supervisors in three different situations might help to highlight these issues.

Examples of authentication activities

Example 1: Observation of Practical Activities

A candidate working towards an SVQ in Childcare and Education could be based in a nursery environment, with a qualified childcare worker (the candidate's line manager) providing support and supervision. In this situation you could provide the assessment supervisor with an observation checklist and ask him or her to observe some specific practical assessment activity. He or she might also be able to question the candidate about the process, using questions and sample answers provided by you for this purpose.

In another example, you might ask an assessment supervisor to observe a candidate using a computer spreadsheet, provided on disk, which the candidate has to modify and print. The assessment supervisor would not have to be an IT lecturer/teacher, but would have to be able to set up the assessment and deal with the situation if there was a problem with the computer or the disk.

In either situation, if the assessment supervisor is to be involved in specific assessment activities, you should:

- ◆ clarify whether the assessment supervisor or another individual is to be responsible for the administration of the assessment activity (the receipt and dispatch of assessment materials; the provision of facilities and resources etc)
- ◆ provide any assessment materials required — these should have been subject to internal moderation within your centre before being issued
- ◆ brief the assessment supervisor about his or her general authentication and supervision responsibilities (face-to-face, phone, letter, e-mail)
- ◆ ensure that he or she is suitably qualified/experienced and able to interpret the assessment materials appropriately
- ◆ brief the candidate and assessment supervisor about any specific assessment activities and the standard of candidate performance required (face-to-face, phone, letter, e-mail)

Some areas of observation are more complex than others. For example, in a situation where you would like the assessment supervisor to observe a group activity and focus on the contribution of an individual candidate, you would have to train him or her in how to use your material. Assessment supervisors should ideally have a background in assessment and recording for this type of situation.

Example 2: Closed-book assessment

Where the internal assessment activity is a closed-book test you could ask the assessment supervisor to invigilate. Candidates working towards a National Course in Computer Systems, for example, would have to undertake closed-book assessments for each Unit of the Course. Where candidates are not local you could arrange for them to take the assessments in learning centres closer to their homes, provided that the learning centre managers agree to invigilate the tests.

In this situation:

- ◆ The *Conditions* for assessment for the activities would be specified in the National Assessment Bank (NAB) items for the Units. You would be responsible for providing assessment supervisors with copies of the NABs and for briefing them (face-to-face, by phone, by letter, by e-mail) on the invigilation process.
- ◆ The assessment supervisors would be expected to agree to:
 - receive the NABs and keep them in a secure place until the time was right to issue them for assessment
 - brief candidates about the test
 - oversee the assessment process, observing that the conditions for assessment were adhered to
 - gather the assessment material at the end of the process
 - deliver or dispatch the assessment evidence and the NABs to you

Example 3: Projects

If you had a candidate following an open learning programme leading to an HNC in Engineering, he or she would be operating outwith the centre when generating much of the evidence. If the programme involved an integrative project, researching local engineering firms for example, you might be able to arrange for a manager in one of the local firms to act as mentor to support the candidate. The mentor could also verify the authenticity of (some of) the candidate's work, such as the research report produced. In this situation it would be advisable for you to:

- ◆ keep in touch with the assessment supervisor (mentor) — by e-mail, phone, fax, face-to-face
- ◆ provide him or her with a clear brief as to the project aims and objectives
- ◆ ask him or her to log the candidate's progress at key stages in the project (or to counter-sign the candidate's log of progress)
- ◆ request that he or she provides a summative statement on the project outcome (the candidate's report) in relation to the aims and objectives of the project

As a final authentication activity, you may also decide to ask the candidate to attend the centre to undertake a supervised evaluation activity (report, presentation etc) on the project.

Conclusion

Assessment supervisors carry out different functions in different situations. The responsibilities you agree with assessment supervisors should be recorded in the documents relating to the programme. SQA staff may enquire about these at various points in the quality assurance process. Some examples of this type of recording document are provided in Appendix 4.

3.3.2 Identifying assessment supervisors (and level of communication required with the centre)

You should ensure that anyone acting on your behalf to support candidates or facilitate assessment is appropriately qualified and/or experienced for the functions you ask them to perform. It is not possible to be prescriptive about the qualifications or experience required of assessment supervisors, since each situation is different. However, appropriate groups of individuals are likely to include:

- ◆ teachers or lecturers
- ◆ other people with a background in education and training (community education workers or training professionals)
- ◆ candidates' employers or supervisors in a workplace environment
- ◆ other experienced practitioners or professional people from within the relevant employment sector

If you are intending to ask assessment supervisors to use assessment materials provided by you (such as checklists), a testimony from an experienced/qualified assessment supervisor should have more weight than a testimony from an unqualified or inexperienced person, who may only be in a position to say that an assessment activity had taken place at a certain point in time.

This is something to consider when recruiting individuals to assist with candidate support and assessment. This will affect the type of person you recruit (qualifications and/or experience), and the level of contact required between you and the individual recruited.

A mentor undertaking the *advising* function would have to be an experienced practitioner who had knowledge of the qualification the candidate was aiming for and the context in which he or she was working. You should be able to contact a candidate's mentor (and the mentor should be able to contact you) as and when required.

For *gathering evidence*, or helping candidates to do this, a mentor would require knowledge of the subject area. He or she would monitor the candidate's progress and identify points at which sufficient evidence had been accumulated to request formal assessment. A mentor carrying out this function is likely to be in touch with you, but it may be the candidate's responsibility to contact you to arrange for formal assessment to take place.

Not everyone taking on the role of *invigilator* would have to be skilled or experienced in the qualification area. Invigilators used for external examinations, for example, are generally people selected for their professional standing or their role in the community, but they could be asked to invigilate for any qualification or subject area (bearing in mind the fact that for external assessment, they cannot be employed by the centre or have any other connection with the centre). If you need to provide invigilators for internal assessment activities, these people could also be non-

specialists, such as administrative staff from within the centre. You would need to brief these individuals, but you need not be in direct contact with them.

3.3.3 Documenting the role of the assessment supervisor

Where you are planning to use an assessment supervisor you should document the role and responsibilities required and agree these with the individual in question. You should also make candidates aware of the assessment supervisor's role in the assessment process.

In some situations you could ask candidates to nominate assessment supervisors, for your approval. In other circumstances, you would recruit the individuals required. In each situation it is always your centre's responsibility to ensure that individuals selected are appropriate for the role they have to undertake. SQA personnel may enquire about systems for recruiting assessment supervisors as part of the quality assurance process. Your documentation should include:

- ◆ records of where assessment supervisors are used within learning/assessment programmes (both for candidate support and in the assessment process)
- ◆ records of agreements between your centre and assessment supervisors on the responsibilities to be undertaken
- ◆ guidance on the type of assessment supervisors required for the programme (eg to assist candidates in identifying appropriate individuals to nominate, if required)
- ◆ criteria on the experience and qualifications required of assessment supervisors — where they will be expected to carry out any specialist functions within the programme (eg using observation checklists and questioning candidates)
- ◆ an outline of the level of communication agreed or required between assessors and assessment supervisors

Some examples of this type of documentation are included in Appendix 4.

3.3.4 Briefing, training and support for assessment supervisors

It is your centre's responsibility to decide on the level of briefing, training and support required for assessment supervisors in each situation. In some cases, it might be sufficient for you to provide the appropriate paperwork and brief the assessment supervisor by telephone. In another situation you may decide to formally train assessment supervisors to support a particular programme, and to de-brief them regularly on the activities they are performing on your behalf. You should consider this issue and ensure that systems are in place to deliver what is required for each situation.

3.3.5 Moving from role to role

Because of the range of functions required to support the assessment process in open and distance learning, you may ask one person to carry out several functions, or to move from one role to another. For example, you could ask someone to act as a *mentor* for one candidate, which could involve gathering and recording candidate's evidence for assessment. You might then decide to use the same individual in an authenticating role for another candidate, and we could also appoint this person as an *invigilator* for external assessment. Provided that roles and responsibilities are clear in each situation, there should be no conflict of interest.

3.3.6 Restrictions on use of assessment supervisors

The one situation where using an individual in the assessment process would be restricted, even where the individual was appropriately qualified and/or experienced, would be where he or she was related to the candidate in any way. In situations where proposed assessment supervisors are relatives or close friends of candidates, you could ask them to advise the candidates, and to assist with the gathering of evidence, but you should not ask them to authenticate candidates' work or invigilate or supervise their assessments.

3.3.7 Collaboration and networking

If you collaborate with other centres you may be able to make the process of recruiting, briefing and using assessment supervisors easier, especially where you are arranging support for candidates taking qualifications through distance learning. It may be possible for you to arrange, for example, for:

- ◆ another centre in a candidate's locality (such as a college, school, training provider or flexible learning centre) to provide an assessment supervisor
- ◆ another centre to provide a qualified and/or experienced assessor to assess elements of a candidate's work (in this situation, even where the other centre is an SQA-approved centre, your centre would remain responsible for ensuring that your candidates were adequately supported, that they had access to assessment, and that the assessment process was subject to appropriate internal quality assurance)
- ◆ centres to work together to create and maintain a joint register of assessment supervisors, some of whom could be subject-specialists, which each centre could use

4 External assessment

4.1 SQA's responsibilities

SQA is responsible for the assessment and quality assurance of externally-assessed qualifications. It is our job to ensure that external assessments are fair and reliable, that national standards are maintained, and that assessments are consistently applied in different situations, with different candidates, according to the *Conditions* outlined in the *Arrangements* documents for the qualification.

To make sure that this happens, we:

- ◆ arrange for external assessment (generally 'unseen' question papers) to take place
- ◆ appoint invigilators to oversee external assessments and meet the costs of this
- ◆ arrange accommodation, provide resources, provide invigilation and meet costs for special assessment arrangements (ie for candidates who need particular equipment, support or assessment accommodation)
- ◆ arrange for assessment of any course-work that contributes to external assessment
- ◆ deploy visiting examiners for external assessments that involve assessment of performance, practical or process skills

4.2 Centre's responsibilities

As we have already said, centres are responsible for the assessment and internal quality assurance of internally-assessed qualifications. Where a qualification includes external assessment, the centre is also responsible for liaising with SQA to facilitate the arrangements for external assessment to take place. If your centre is approved to offer a qualification that includes an external assessment component, for example a National Qualification such as Higher English and Communication, the centre will be approved to administer the external component of the qualification. Most schools and further education colleges are already approved to do this, as are some other types of organisation. The *Conditions and Arrangements for National Qualifications (A0820)* outlines the requirements for centres wishing to do this.

If your centre offers this type of qualification by open learning, your candidates may be able to attend the centre for external assessment. Where this is not possible, for example with some distance learning candidates, it is your responsibility to arrange for the candidates to access the external assessment elsewhere. You should try to arrange for this to take place at another centre which is approved to run the external assessment. If you can arrange for candidates to take part in examination events for the subject which have been programmed to take place in, for example, a local school, SQA will ensure the candidates' examination papers are available on the day.

Where the external assessment requires visiting examination, and you are not able to arrange for candidates to attend the centre, you should liaise with SQA to arrange for the visit to take place at another location that is acceptable to candidates, your centre and SQA. If there are several candidates taking the qualification, and each is working from a different location, you should try to bring the candidates together, where possible, to a central location.

In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible for your candidate to attend a centre which is approved to administer the external assessment, you may be able arrange for the assessment to take place in non-approved accommodation, such as the candidate's place of work. In this situation your centre will be responsible for:

- ◆ nominating the required number of invigilators (where required) subject to criteria laid down by SQA
- ◆ paying invigilation costs (where required)
- ◆ ensuring the centre can conform to our requirements in relation to appropriateness of accommodation, facilities and equipment
- ◆ arrangements for storage and handling of assessment materials (such as examination papers) and candidate evidence (such as completed examination scripts)
- ◆ liaising with us to ensure any special assessment arrangements for the candidate are met

The *Guide to Approval for Training Providers and Employers* (A0961) provides information on the criteria centres need to meet to be approved to administer external assessments for National Qualifications, including:

- ◆ minimum criteria for accommodation for an examination event
- ◆ supplementary facilities and equipment
- ◆ appointment of invigilators
- ◆ management of information for examinations

There is a summary in Appendix 3 of this guide.

Estimates and appeals

For National Courses, you will be responsible for providing SQA with estimates of performance for each candidate, and for submitting formal appeals on candidate results in the external assessment, where this is required. Estimates are required by April/May for external assessments being taken in May/June.

Where a qualification is being offered by open or distance learning and you are involving other individuals in the internal assessment process, or are arranging for

other centres to administer the external assessment, you should ensure that you have sufficient assessment evidence within your centre to be able to make estimates and appeals.

For more information on providing estimates, see *Guidance on generating evidence for National Course Estimates and Assessment Appeals* (A0992). For guidance on appeals, see *The Appeals Process* (A0690/2, June 2000).

5 Approval, external quality assurance, and auditing

This section offers a summary of the approval, quality assurance, and auditing processes that are relevant to open and distance learning. By ‘approval’ we mean the processes by which we:

- ◆ authorise centres to offer SQA provision — ‘approval as an SQA centre’
- ◆ authorise centres to offer each SQA qualification — ‘approval to offer specific qualifications’

We use the term ‘external moderation’ for the quality assurance processes which we use to check that internal assessments meet the national standard. For SVQs (only) this is called ‘external *verification*’. *Systems verification* is also used for monitoring the quality systems in some centres.

By ‘auditing’ we mean the process we use to check on the quality systems of those centres which have devolved responsibility to approve themselves to offer SQA qualifications and to validate some qualifications. By collating all the information we hold on centres’ internal assessments, we have been able to reduce the audit burden on centres.

5.1 Approval

The SQA publication *Guide to Approval (for Training Providers and Employers)* (A0961) outlines the criteria we use and the process involved in approving as a centre and approving to offer a specific qualification. This publication is written for training providers and employers since most schools are approved as centres automatically by agreement with local education authorities, and as such are approved to offer a range of SQA qualifications appropriate to schools. All colleges are already approved as centres, and most have achieved devolved authority to approve themselves to offer (devolvable) SQA qualifications.

Centres with devolved authority for approval of specific qualifications

For those centres which have the authority to approve themselves to offer SQA qualifications, we will gather information on their open or distance learning provision during the auditing process. The auditing process is discussed later in this section.

Centres without devolved authority for approval of specific qualifications

Centres which do not have the authority to approve themselves to offer SQA qualifications should apply to SQA for approval. During approval, we will gather information on your intentions to offer qualifications by open or distance learning,

including information on the materials, resources and assessment methods you intend to use (for example, on-line assessment).

The approval process

In *initial approval as an SQA centre* we make sure that your centre has the management structure and quality assurance systems it needs to support the delivery, assessment and internal moderation of SQA qualifications.

In *approval to offer specific qualifications* we make sure that your centre has appropriately qualified and experienced staff, the reference and learning materials, the assessment materials, and the equipment and accommodation it will need for the qualification you want to deliver. We also check your internal moderation system, in relation to the specific qualification, to ensure that it meets our quality requirements.

The process is the same whether you propose to offer the qualification through regular attendance at the centre or through open or distance learning. However, we will ask you about the mode of delivery you intend to use. If you intend to offer SQA qualifications by distance learning to candidates living outwith the UK, we would expect you to demonstrate the ways in which your quality system will extend to ensure that SQA quality criteria can be met.

There are full details of the approval criteria in the *Guide to Approval (for Training Providers and Employers)* (A0961, March 2000). The criteria that are directly relevant to delivery by open and distance learning are summarised below.

Resource management (initial approval); resources to support the assessment of the qualification (approval for specific qualifications)

Centres must be able to show that learning, reference and assessment materials are adequate for candidates, and that they can provide an environment which helps candidates achieve the qualification. This includes sufficient equipment to allow each candidate to develop the skills, knowledge and competence defined in the qualification.

If you intend to offer a qualification by open or distance learning, we would want to know how candidates will be able to access any equipment and resources which are generally held in the centre. For example, if the qualification involves the development of practical skills, we would want to know how candidates would be able to access machinery, equipment or tools.

Learning, reference and assessment materials could include books and handouts, videos, procedures and manuals, technical and professional publications, and professional journals. For programmes delivered through open learning and, specifically, programmes delivered by distance learning, we would expect the content and format of the materials to reflect the need to provide additional support to candidates. ICT-supported programmes, for example, might include web-based and

multimedia resources which, because of their interactive nature, should help candidates to manage their learning and make decisions, and so compensate for lack of face-to-face tutorials and seminars.

Centres are also asked to provide details of the methods of assessment they plan to use, such as role-play, observation, case studies, projects, written or oral questioning, unseen tests, and simulation. We would expect you to provide information on how the assessment approaches will operate, especially for candidates living outwith the vicinity of the centre, and how you will authenticate candidates' work.

Management of staff (initial approval); staff qualifications and experience (approval for specific qualifications)

Centres must be able to show that staff are appropriately qualified or experienced in the delivery and assessment of SQA qualifications. Staff are required to be competent in the subject/occupational area to a level appropriate to the qualification, and also competent in assessment.

We will need details on the qualifications and experience of each member of staff who will be involved in assessing and internally moderating (or verifying) the qualification. For SVQs, assessors and internal verifiers should be competent to the standards defined by the Employment National Training Organisation (either D32 *Assess Candidate Performance* or D33 *Assess Candidate Performance Using Differing Sources of Evidence*, depending on the nature of what is being assessed) or should hold secondary or further education teaching qualifications (TQSE or TQFE).

Many members of staff in SQA-approved centres will have experience and/or qualifications relating to the delivery and assessment of qualifications through open and distance learning. In the ICT environment centre staff may also find they are required to be proficient in using video-conferencing equipment, e-mail, e-conferencing and on-line assessment. New qualifications covering these skills are emerging — one of these is the SQA Unit *Providing On-line Support for Learners: an Introduction*, which is being piloted until 2001. We do not specify qualifications of this nature as requirements, but do encourage centres to make use of them.

Management of candidates (initial approval)

Centres must be able to show that candidates will be given adequate induction, guidance and support. This includes requirements to provide them with information on the qualification and on the procedures for training, support, assessment, review, guidance, evidence-gathering, and (where appropriate) portfolio-development. The roles and responsibilities of staff should also be explained.

Your approval application should explain how you will provide induction, guidance and support to candidates who are not able to attend the centre. If you have decided to support learning programmes using ICT, you should indicate the software and electronic tools you intend to use to communicate with candidates and to facilitate communication between candidates. You should also indicate the ways in which candidates will be able to access the hardware and software required.

The level of support required from assessors varies from one candidate to the next, and it is the centre's responsibility to ensure that there is an appropriate ratio of assessors to candidates for each qualification offered.

Internal moderation (initial approval and approval to offer specific qualifications)

We do not prescribe the methods of internal moderation to be used by centres. In some cases, moderation will be the responsibility of named individuals; in others it will happen through an agreed process. Whichever method is to be used, your documentation must show *at the approval stage*, that there are systems in place to ensure that:

- ◆ assessment results will be consistent between assessors
- ◆ assessors' judgements will be consistent for different candidates
- ◆ assessment and recording procedures will be followed
- ◆ evidence of assessment will be available for external moderation

If you have an established centre-wide process for internal moderation of qualifications offered by regular attendance at the centre, you should show how this could be extended to cover qualifications offered by flexible learning. For example, internal moderators should be able to meet regularly to ensure consistency in interpretation of standards. Where internal moderators are not located in the centre, meetings of this sort could take place using video-conferencing or via the internet using virtual meeting facilities.

Your internal moderation system should allow assessment instruments to be checked before use and their use monitored, in different situations and contexts, and with different assessors and candidates at different times. For a qualification to be offered through flexible learning, you should be able to show that this will include assessment instruments used for part-time and evening provision (in colleges), and any materials sent to outreach centres or sites, or to individuals responsible for supervising assessment activities in other locations.

Our Assessment Services Unit offers a prior moderation of assessment instruments service for some qualifications.

5.2 External quality assurance

Once approved to offer a specific qualification, your centre must show that you are continuing to meet the approval criteria.

We routinely monitor all SQA-approved centres to ensure that qualifications they are offering continue to meet national standards, and we reserve the right to withdraw

approval where a centre is not complying with the required criteria. External quality assurance happens in various ways, including:

- ◆ external moderation — we select centres for moderation, and identify candidates whose evidence should be submitted or made available
- ◆ systems verification — our systems verifiers visit centres to advise on quality systems and ensure that centres' systems continue to meet SQA quality criteria

External moderation

External moderation focuses on completed candidate evidence. A centre's track-records in assessment and internal quality assurance will have an influence on whether or not it is selected for moderation.

The timing of moderation depends on the completion date you submit when you enter your candidates for the qualification, which means that it is essential that you notify us of any changes to completion dates. Candidates taking a qualification through flexible learning may progress through the qualification at a pace which is different to that anticipated.

Our publication *Putting Assessment Moderation Policy into Operation* (A0892) gives details on the assessment moderation system.

There are two types of moderation: *central* and *visiting*. Central moderation is used for evidence that can be transported to SQA (*postal* moderation is also used). Visiting moderation is used where evidence is bulky or ephemeral, and often where evidence is produced in workplace conditions. The evidence that is sampled ideally comprises the work of 12 candidates for each Unit to be moderated.

It is your responsibility to ensure that candidate evidence is available either to send to SQA or to present to external moderators when they visit your centre. Where evidence from candidates following an open or distance learning route arises in the sample, moderators will also expect to be able to access information and documentation on the authenticity of candidates' work. For example, they may ask about the package or 'mix' of authentication tools and approaches used for the qualification.

When external moderators visit centres they will consider candidate evidence in electronic as well as paper format, if required, provided it is as easily accessed and organised, and someone is available to explain the system. If you intend to produce evidence in electronic format, and it is likely to be subject to central moderation, the software you use should be compatible with the systems available in SQA.

If your centre is not selected for external moderation, you should retain candidate evidence, either in paper or electronic format, until at least three weeks after the completion date for the Unit. If you are selected for external moderation you should retain the candidate evidence until at least three weeks after the moderation decision.

Systems verification

Systems verification is designed to ensure that your centre's systems continue to meet SQA quality criteria — for all of the qualifications you offer rather than for a specific qualification. When systems verifiers visit centres to monitor and advise on quality systems, they may ask in general terms about systems to support qualifications offered by open and distance learning.

For example, they may ask about:

- ◆ management of delivery and assessment
- ◆ collaboration and networking with other centres
- ◆ staffing and facilities for effective delivery and reliable and valid assessment
- ◆ guidance and support procedures
- ◆ access to learning and assessment materials and opportunities, resources and equipment
- ◆ induction for candidates

5.3 Auditing

Some centres have undergone an SQA audit and achieved devolved authority to approve themselves to offer SQA qualifications. Once they have achieved this, we carry out regular audits of their systems to ensure that they continue to meet SQA requirements. Audits can take place by visit or can be 'desk-based'.

For desk audits, the information we will ask centres to provide will include information about any provision being offered by distance learning. In this way we will ensure that the systems used to approve, assess and internally moderate distance learning provision continue to meet our requirements, and therefore that the qualifications maintain national standards and are adequately supported.

Appendix 1 gives examples of some of the issues which may be considered during the approval, monitoring or auditing processes. Appendices 2–4 provide examples of planning documents relating to open or distance learning programmes.

The SQA quality criteria are detailed in *Quality Assurance: Principles, Elements and Criteria* (A0798).

Appendix 1: Issues for programme design

1 Internal Assessment

- 1 What approaches are used to provide candidates with learning and assessment materials? What format do these materials take? For example:
 - ◆ web-based materials
 - ◆ flexible learning packs
 - ◆ CD-ROM/DVD-ROM
 - ◆ video and audio cassettes
- 2 What arrangements have been made to provide candidates with access to necessary equipment and other resources?
- 3 How does communication between candidates and the centre take place? Who in the centre is responsible for this? How frequently are candidates able to contact the centre?
- 4 Who assesses the qualification? What is the ratio of candidates to assessors? How are candidates able to contact the assessor, and how frequently (if the assessor is someone other than their contact for the qualification)?
- 5 What mechanisms are used to gather candidate evidence and to feed back to candidates?
- 6 If observation or supervision of candidates' performance is required, how is this achieved?

For example:

- ◆ the assessor visits candidates periodically
- ◆ activities are planned and candidates:
 - attend the centre for these (eg individual activities, weekend events or summer school events)
 - attend another centre and are assessed by a qualified/experienced subject specialist, or
 - attend another centre and are supervised by a responsible person (eg a school, college or in a workplace environment) and are then questioned by the assessor
- ◆ activities are recorded for assessment purposes (video, slide show with voice-over, video-conferencing, etc)

- 7 Who is responsible for receipt and issue of assessment materials and/or for administration of the assessment activity?
- 8 If a qualified/experienced subject specialist is required (other than the named assessor) how is their suitability for the role ensured?
- 9 If assessment supervisors are used how is their suitability for the role ensured?
- 10 Is there a system in place to recruit, appoint and brief assessment supervisors? For example, how are they informed of what is required in each situation (ie gathering evidence, advising, supporting, supervising, invigilating)?
- 11 Where assessment supervisors are being used as mentors, is there a system in place to support and monitor them over time?
- 12 How are assessment instruments generated or selected? How does the internal moderation for the qualification operate (eg how are internally-generated assessment instruments checked and monitored when used in different locations, and how are assessment judgements moderated)?
- 13 What features are built into the programme to provide candidate support? For example:
 - ◆ Frequent and regular contact with the assessor, to provide support:
 - by telephone
 - by post
 - through programmed face-to-face tutorials
 - on-line
 - through video conferencing or telematics
 - ◆ Support from a mentor:
 - through regular contact (eg in a workplace setting)
 - using any of the methods listed above
 - ◆ Peer support through:
 - activities or events to allow contact with other candidates
 - provision of on-line support, such as a chat or discussion forum
 - video or telephone conferencing
 - ◆ Support from others:
 - administrative staff within the centre (eg where this is required to arrange contact with assessment supervisors, scheduling of assessments or supervised activities and dispatch and receipt of materials)
 - technical staff within the centre (eg for problems with video or video conferencing equipment, software and hardware, or connectivity where this is wholly or in part the centre's responsibility)

2 External Assessment

- 1 What arrangements have been made to allow candidates to undertake the external assessment for the qualification?
- 2 If accommodation is required for external assessment, and a centre that is not already approved by SQA to act as an examination centre is to be used:
 - a) How is the appropriateness of the accommodation to be ensured?
 - b) If invigilators are to be used, is there a system in place to recruit, appoint and brief them (to ensure their suitability for the role)?

Appendix 2: Flexible learning programmes — examples

1 Provision of learning and assessment materials (range of methods)

	Text-based flexible learning material	CD ROM, DVD ROM, web-based material	Video, and/or audio material	Access to PC or laptop	Access to other necessary equipment (eg video, industrial machinery/ equipment, science laboratory)
Group A: Local candidates — home based study for HN Units in Computing	Candidates provided with handouts and flexipacks	Access to centre website provided, plus CD ROMs	N/A	Candidates work from own PCs at home	Some group work involved — electronic learning environment provides candidates with virtual classroom facility which they use to collaborate on the project
Group B: Non-local candidates — home based study for Intermediate 2 French	Materials provided. Access to college language laboratory and library for those who can attend centre. Others generally access this through local learning centres	CDs provided	Modern Language audio and video tapes provided	Candidates work from PCs at home	N/A
Group C: Local candidates —work based study for SVQ Level 3 Fishing Vessel Operations (Inshore)	SVQ electronic portfolio provided	Materials via the college website and web addresses provided to access material from other sites	Some video clips included in the multi media materials	Some candidates can work from terminals when on board fishing vessels — most work from the flexible learning unit when onshore	All practical assessments take place on board fishing vessels (see p3 re authentication)
Group D: Non-local candidates —work based study for SVQ Level 2 Administration	SVQ portfolio shell provided	Access to the website where we store a wide range of relevant learning materials	Videos provided	Access through employer premises	Access to office/administration environment through employer premises

2: Candidate communication and support, including feedback (range of methods)

	Face-to-face tutorials	Tutor support by telephone and/or by post	Tutor support by e-mail	Video-conferencing, telematics or electronic chat forum support (tutor or other candidates)	Access to mentor	Administrative and/or technical support
Group A: Local candidates —home based study for HN Units in Computing	N/A	Telephone contact available Tuesday pm and Friday am and pm. Tutor marked assignments returned by post within one week	Available day and evenings	Virtual classroom facilities provided. Some candidates have voice conferencing or telematic equipment, but not all	N/A	Admin support staff contactable by phone or e-mail during centre opening hours. Technical support for course available via contact with assessor
Group B: Non-local candidates — home based study for Intermediate 2 French	Tutorials can be arranged within the college for those candidates who are able to attend	Tutors in regular telephone contact with candidates. Tutor marked assignments returned to candidates by post within one week of receipt	Each candidate has an e-mail address and tutors can be e-mailed at any time	College has both video conferencing and voicelink facilities. Most candidates use local learning centres and we encourage them to use this equipment (where available) to link with tutors and other candidates during the course	N/A	A technical support helpline which candidates can access during college hours
Group C: Local candidates — work based study for SVQ Level 3 Fishing Vessel Operations (Inshore)	Candidates get tutorial support when attending our flexible learning centre	Contact by telephone is possible during college opening hours	Candidates can send and receive e-mail from flexible learning centre — or from fishing vessels in some cases	N/A	Where possible skippers are assigned as mentors	IT/technical support available from our staff in the flexible leaning centre. College administration staff contactable by phone
Group D: Non-local candidates —work based Study for SVQ Level 2 Administration	Candidates are not generally able to attend the centre for tutorials	Candidates contact tutors by phone Mon and Wed am and Friday pm. Assignments are posted or e-mailed – turnaround is generally 3 or 4 working days	Tutors can be contacted by e-mail. All candidates have e-mail addresses in their places of work and some also have home e-mail addresses	Some candidates can access telematic equipment in their places of work. We do try to use this for providing feedback and for authentication purposes — but if there are technical problems this can sometimes discourage candidates	Candidates assigned mentors in the workplace. Candidates recommend individuals, on the basis of criteria we provide, and we secure their commitment	Staff in appropriate department are available for general admin queries. Telephone support for technical queries is more difficult to provide but candidates can generally get support from assessors

3: Access to Assessment and Authentication (range of methods)

	Assessment in centre (summative assessment)	Assessment activities supervised elsewhere (invigilator, authenticator, or mentor)	Tutor-marked assignments (by post or e-mail)	Use of phone, e-mail, video links (for assessment and/or questioning to authenticate work)	ICT tools used (for authentication)	External assessment arrangements
Group A: Local candidates — home based study for HN Units in Computing	Candidates come in to centre for end of unit assessments (supervised)	N/A	Most assignment evidence is e-mailed to assessors directly. There is a quick turnaround to provide feedback and support to candidates	Virtual classroom/chat room facility provided which candidates also use for group work	Electronic learning environment records all transactions between assessor and candidate and between candidates – assessors quickly become familiar with the style and quality of each candidate's work	N/A
Group B: Non-local candidates — home based study for Intermediate 2 French	Candidates attend local learning centres for end of unit written assessments	Local learning centre managers operate as authenticators	Assignments (written or audio taped evidence) received and returned within one week	Oral assessments when candidates attend centre, or by phone if from local learning centres with learning centre managers confirming candidates' identities Tapes retained for external moderation for 'speaking' component of external assessment	Password controlled e-mail currently – voice recognition software is being explored within the college	Candidates either attend college for summer examination diet, or the assessment can be taken in the local learning centre. Oral component (speaking) internally assessed, and externally moderated by SQA
Group C: Local candidates —work based study for SVQ Level 3 Fishing Vessel Operations (Inshore)	Written assessments supervised in the flexible learning unit – timetabled to suit candidate progression and local fishing sector requirements	Skippers act as mentors and (if not related to candidate) authenticators for on-board practical assessments (if related, other crew members take on this role). College provides assessment checklists etc	Assignments received by e-mail or post. These can be sporadic, depending on fishing schedules/seasons	(Where candidates cannot come in to the college to be questioned by the assessor directly) on-line or telephone questioning via the learning centre. This is generally after assessors have received written work and/or observation checklists relating to the practical skills	Password controlled portfolio which can only be accessed by the candidate, assessor, internal verifier or external verifier	N/A
Group D: Non-local candidates — work Based Study for SVQ Level 2 Administration	Summative assessments are supervised in employer premises, often by a member of the company training and development staff	Employers act as mentors, supervise practical activities and authenticate candidate work Records of who (in places of work) will act as mentors, and of their qualifications and experience. Written confirmation of their responsibilities	Portfolio (electronic or paper-based) holds most evidence — relevant sections posted or e-mailed to assessor. Assignments set and received by post or e-mail	Where telematic equipment in place of work, candidates send assignments by e-mail and telematic sessions are programmed with assessor for feedback and authentication purposes	Telematic equipment and/or video conferencing facilities used where available to candidates. Password controlled portfolio evidence	N/A

Flexible Learning Programme: Candidate at school

Candidate Name/Number

Qualification Higher Psychology

Details of candidates' situation Non-local; candidate's own school does not offer Higher Psychology; she will study from home/own school — unlikely to attend this centre

<p>Provision of learning and assessment materials</p>	<p>School/department website plus flexible learning pack and CD ROM</p> <p>Candidate works from PC at home or from own school</p> <p>Access to science lab in own school (where required) is programmed to coincide with lab sessions here, and will be supervised by staff in the candidate's school</p>
<p>Candidate communication and support (including feedback)</p>	<p>Telephone contact available with teacher/assessor Tuesday (pm) and Friday (am). Assignments sent and returned by post within one week.</p> <p>We have arranged for candidate to chat on-line with several other students on the course</p> <p>Departmental support staff here are contactable by phone during school opening hours</p> <p>Technical support for course available via contact with teacher/assessor</p>
<p>Access to assessment and authentication</p>	<p>Candidate takes end-of-Unit assessments under supervision within own school</p> <p>Assessor uses telephone and e-mail to question candidate on her work</p> <p>Password controlled system used for e-mailed evidence and on-line transactions are recorded</p>
<p>External assessment arrangements</p>	<p>External assessment is in form of confidential question paper — candidate to take paper in own school — invigilation has been arranged</p> <p>Candidate aiming for summer examination diet</p>

Flexible Learning Programme: Group

Group Code/Number

Qualification SVQ Administration Level 2

Details of Group Situation Local work-based study — may be able to attend centre

Details of authentication approaches used	Employers provide staff to act as assessment supervisors for practical activities Telematic equipment available in places of work. Candidates send assignments by e-mail and telematic sessions are programmed with assessor for feedback and authentication purposes
Appointment/recruitment of assessment supervisors	Employers also provide suitably qualified staff to act as mentors — often the mentor will also be an assessment supervisor — but a number of assessment supervisors can be used for one candidate College contacts employer and asks them to propose suitably qualified mentor. Employer responds with written details on qualifications and experience of the proposed mentor Mentors' responsibilities are discussed with them by phone and confirmed in writing
Briefing/training of assessment supervisors	Mentors are sent information pack on qualification, including activities to be assessed and methods of assessment. Role of the mentors explained in the pack Authentication role for specific assessment activities discussed by phone with mentor several weeks before activities occur. Mentor briefs assessment supervisors (if different) and organises activities
Functions required of assessment supervisors	Advising candidates ✓ (mentor) Gathering evidence Authenticating work ✓ (assessment supervisor) Invigilating or supervising assessments ✓ (assessment supervisor) Receipt of secure assessment materials ✓ (assessment supervisor) Administration of assessment activities ✓ (mentor)
Provision of assessment materials to assessment supervisors	Any assessment materials required (eg activity logs, observation checklists) sent out to mentors during week before activity due to take place
De-briefing/support for assessment supervisors	Mentors debrief assessment supervisors (if different) and provide written feedback on activity after event. This is sent with candidates' evidence to assessors On-line workshop in mentoring skills under development — mentors will have access to the materials developed for this in a variety of formats (text based, video etc)

Appendix 3: External assessment

Criteria for centres offering external assessment (National Qualifications)

Resource Evaluation

The centre will:

- store and disseminate information to all relevant parties on examination procedures and timetables
- nominate invigilators
- submit accurate entry details and estimates of performance for each candidate
- ensure that candidates understand the assessment criteria and form of assessment by which they will be assessed
- ensure access for disabled candidates to both the centre and the examination room
- make arrangements with SQA for special assessment needs
- respond to requests for feedback
- submit assessment appeals where supported by coursework evidence

Invigilators:

- are not connected with the centre
- are not a parent, partner or child of a candidate
- are not an employee of the centre
- are trustworthy
- do not suffer from a disability which could impair their ability to carry out the role (eg hearing impaired/sight impaired)
- are able to supply locked storage for question papers prior to examination and scripts after examination

Accommodation:

(Maximum number of candidates that can be accommodated for an examination should be stated)

- has a level floor
- is without galleries
- has no pictures, teaching aids, maps or diagrams on its walls at the time of the examination
- has sufficient single desks or tables and chairs for the number of candidates stated
- has seats/desks consecutively numbered (a record must be kept of this arrangement of numbers and retained for six months)
- has, where practicable, a minimum distance of 1.25m between one row of candidates and another
- has suitably equipped rooms for all candidates taking practical tests
- provides a means to allow the invigilator to summon assistance
- has secure storage for papers and scripts
- has a working clock, clearly visible to all candidates
- has toilet facilities for both male and female and for disabled candidates

Appendix 4: Documentation for nominating and appointment assessment supervisors (examples)

ODL1: Letter to candidate seeking nomination of an assessment supervisor

Dear

Open and Distance Learning Assessment Arrangements

To enable (_____CENTRE NAME_____) to meet the Scottish Qualifications Authority's assessment procedures some of the assessments leading to the certification of

Unit (Number) _____ Unit_____ (Name)_____

must be carried out under direct supervision

You are invited to nominate a person who would be prepared to act as your assessment supervisor. An appropriate person to nominate might be:

- a teacher/lecturer employed in a local school or college
- the Personnel Officer within your place of employment
- your work supervisor/manager
- any other suitable person

Once you have identified and obtained the agreement of this person, you should complete the enclosed form ODL 2 giving his/her details.

Assessment material will be sent directly to your assessment supervisor with clear instructions on the conditions under which the assessment should be taken. When you have completed your assessments the material will be returned by the supervisor directly to me. I will then inform you of the outcome of the assessment.

If you have any questions about this process please contact me by telephoning (_____telephone number_____) or e-mailing me at (_____e-mail address_____)

Yours sincerely

Tutor/Assessor

ODL 2: Reply from candidate nominating an assessment supervisor

CANDIDATE'S NAME

ADDRESS

UNIT (Number)

UNIT (Name)

DETAILS OF ASSESSMENT SUPERVISOR

NAME

ADDRESS

OCCUPATION

PLACE OF WORK

TELEPHONE

Is this a home or work number?

FAX

e-mail

ODL 3: Letter to assessment supervisor confirming role

ASSESSMENT SUPERVISOR'S
NAME

ADDRESS

DATE

Dear

Open and Distance Learning Assessment Arrangements

I am writing to inform you that you have been nominated by the following open/distance learning candidate

NAME

ADDRESS

to act as a supervisor for his/her assessments during the following programme of units:

UNIT (Number) UNIT (Name)

UNIT (Number) UNIT (Name)

When the candidate is ready to be assessed you will be provided with a clear brief describing the conditions under which each of the assessments should be carried out. I would be grateful if you would complete the accompanying reply form ODL 4 and return it to me as soon as possible using the stamped addressed envelope provided.

May I take this opportunity of thanking you for your co-operation.

If you have any questions about your role as assessment supervisor please contact me by telephoning

(_____ telephone number _____) or e-mailing me on (_____ e-mail address _____)

Yours sincerely

Tutor/Assessor

ODL 4: Letter confirming assessment supervisor's acceptance of responsibilities

DECLARATION BY ASSESSMENT SUPERVISOR

I agree to supervise the assessments for:

CANDIDATE'S NAME

and will undertake to ensure that they will be carried out in accordance with the assessment briefs supplied by the Course Tutor/Assessor.

NAME (in block capitals)

SIGNED

DATE

ODL 5: Letter to accompany each assessment brief

ASSESSMENT SUPERVISOR'S
NAME

ADDRESS

DATE

Dear

SQA Assessment Procedures

I am writing to you about the conditions for assessment relating to the programme of study for the following candidate:

CANDIDATE'S NAME

ADDRESS

UNIT (Number)

UNIT (Name)

OUTCOME (Number)

When the candidate has completed the assessment please collect all evidence relating to the assessment and forward it to me along with the enclosed ODL7 form confirming that the assessment has been carried out as requested. FREEPOST envelopes have been enclosed for your convenience.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Tutor/Assessor

ODL 6: Assessment brief

The assessment for

UNIT (Name)

UNIT (Number)

OUTCOME

(Number)

should be carried out under the following conditions:

DURATION (eg _____1 HOUR AND 30 MINUTES_____)

ACCOMMODATION A suitable area should be provided where the candidate can work on the assessment without interruptions. Details on requirements for accommodation are provided in the enclosed document – *Criteria for centres offering external assessment (National Qualifications)*.

SUPERVISION You should remain with the candidate while the assessment is taking place.

AIDS The candidate should have no aids or resources other than (eg_____writing instruments, ruler and a calculator. Extra blank paper may be provided_____).

ODL 7: Form to accompany each completed assessment

This is to certify that:

CANDIDATE (Name)

has carried out the assessment for

UNIT (Number)

OUTCOME (Number)

under the conditions stated in the assessment brief on (date _____) at
(location_____).

SIGNED

NAME (in block capitals)

DATE