

National Occupational Standards
for
Supply Chain Management
Assessment Strategy for NVQs and SVQs

October 2013

Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply, Chartered Institute of Logistics
and Transport (UK) and Skills for Logistics

Introduction

This document sets out the recommendations of the Supply Chain Management NOS Board for the assessment of NVQ and SVQ qualifications based on the National Occupational Standards for Supply Chain Management.

This strategy supersedes and replaces the Assessment Strategy for Supply Chain Management NVQs and SVQs dated July 2005.

This new Assessment Strategy is compliant with UK legislation relating to age discrimination and reflects the guidance provided to SSCs/SSBs by SQA Accreditation in September 2013.

The principles set out in this strategy are *in addition* to the regulatory requirements that awarding bodies must meet. This includes the requirements for the delivery of SVQs, as required by SQA Accreditation's current regulatory requirements and guidance.

Application of the Strategy

This Assessment Strategy relates only to NVQs and SVQs based on the national occupational standards for Supply Chain Management (SCM). These were developed by the Institute Partners Group acting as the Standards Setting Body (SSB) for this occupational area. This comprised the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS), Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), Institute of Export, and Institute of Operations Management.

These NOS are managed by the Supply Chain Management NOS Board. This comprises of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS), Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) and Skills for Logistics (SfL) who are the recognised SSC for these NOS.

The NVQs and SVQs covered by this Assessment Strategy are:

- NVQ in Supply Chain Management at levels 2,3,4,and 5
- SVQ in Supply Chain Management at levels 2,3,4,and 5

The Assessment Strategy is a requirement for any SSC/SSBs and Awarding Bodies (ABs) that import the SCM national occupational standards into NVQs and SVQs that are not primarily designed for SCM practitioners.

Principles for the Assessment Strategy

The Assessment Strategy is designed to provide overarching principles for the Awarding Bodies that complement the requirements of the regulatory bodies for NVQs and SVQs. The SCM NOS Board regard Awarding Bodies as being

AS Approved 13 November 2013 v.2

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responsible for providing quality assurance processes for the assessment of the SCM standards within NVQs and SVQs. The ABs are in the best position to provide detailed assessment guidance and evidence requirements; they will need to consider whether this is achieved individually or collectively. Suitably qualified and experienced Assessors, Internal Verifiers, and External Verifiers must be allowed to apply their professional judgement; however, they must also ensure that they comply with the assessment guidance and evidence requirements in a consistent manner. Assessment should be effective but not overly burdensome, and assessors and verifiers should establish methods to achieve this balance.

External quality control of assessment

The SCM NOS Board believes that the quality assurance principles enshrined in national guidelines produced by the regulatory bodies, if implemented correctly, provide sufficient guidance to the Awarding Bodies in matters relating to the quality assurance and control of NVQs and SVQs in the SCM sector. If the SCM NOS Board has concerns about the effectiveness of an awarding body it has the right to raise these objections with the relevant AB, and if necessary, with the regulatory bodies.

The standards setting body (Skills for Logistics) will meet as required with the Awarding Bodies to discuss and resolve assessment issues. These meetings will seek to improve quality and consistency, and in particular will provide opportunities to identify and address any emerging areas of risk resulting from the performance of assessment centres, and to target external verification activity if necessary. Working with the Awarding Bodies, Skills for Logistics will:

- facilitate the flow of non-confidential information between the SCM NOS Board and the ABs relating to the delivery of the SCM qualifications
- collate information and statistics about the take up of the qualifications for each country
- identify trends and developments affecting the delivery of the qualification
- consider any changes in legislation, policies, or other external factors that could affect the legitimacy of the standards and the qualifications
- resolve issues relating to the interpretation of the SCM national occupational standards
- provide ongoing review of feedback on the content of the SCM national occupational standards, particularly to inform incremental review
- report and consider risk factors arising from the performance of assessment centres

- resolve issues relating to the definition of occupational experience of assessors, internal verifiers, and external verifiers
- act as the arbiter on the interpretation of the Assessment Strategy.

Performance in the workplace

The SCM NOS Board affirms that it is critical to the validity of the NVQs and SVQs that performance is assessed in the workplace. All the units of competence in the SCM standards are designed to reflect the expected performance of practitioners in real workplace settings. The standards have been tested to ensure that performance evidence can be collected in a reasonable time and cost. There are no circumstances where performance cannot be assessed using the established assessment methods of observation and scrutiny of documentary evidence and reports. Where a candidate is not in a position to provide evidence due to their current assignment or position, they will need to negotiate suitable opportunities to generate evidence, e.g. through a work placement or a simulation. This must be planned and agreed with the assessment centre and if necessary with employers at the commencement of the qualification.

Use of simulation to obtain performance evidence

Simulation should not be viewed as a main source of performance evidence in NVQs and SVQs. The SCM NOS Board believes that the most reliable performance evidence is generated through naturally occurring work activities. It can be disruptive and expensive to create a realistic working environment to provide an alternative to this. While there are sophisticated business simulations available, these are more appropriate to learning rather than assessing competence.

While there are no aspects of the standards that cannot be assessed using sources other than simulation, the SCM NOS Board recognises that it is possible that there will be situations where individual candidates may find it difficult to provide performance evidence derived from their normal working activities. In these situations, simulation can be considered as an option. For example, a candidate might be working on a project to set up a supply chain across a number of countries, when one of those countries becomes politically unstable. The candidate might have invested a substantial amount of time on this one project, and it might have been the prime source of evidence covering a number of units of competence. In this situation, through no fault of their own, the project is abandoned. It is possible then to game-play the situation which might have occurred if the project had gone more smoothly.

If simulation is required, then this must be agreed with the External Verifier, who will have to decide whether the circumstances warrant its use. Only when other sources of performance evidence cannot be accessed effectively without undue burden on the candidate, should simulation be allowed. External Verifiers should discuss these situations with the Assessor and Candidate, and be able to establish a rationale for the decision. The AB is

responsible for the parameters under which the simulation should operate in order to avoid the use of invalid and unacceptable practice. Where simulation is used to generate evidence of competence, this should not be used as the sole source of evidence for any one unit of competence. Other sources and types of evidence will need to be generated to corroborate the evidence derived from simulation.

Occupational expertise of Assessors, Internal Verifiers, and External Verifiers

It is important that Assessors, Internal Verifiers (IVs), and External Verifiers (EVs) of NVQs and SVQs have appropriate occupational experience to fulfil their roles. This is required in addition to the achievement of the other requirements specified in national codes of practice and encompassed by the quality assurance procedures of the awarding bodies. The assessment process must be credible, and the importance of assessors and verifiers in this cannot be underestimated. The SCM NOS Board does recognise that the search for experience and ability also has to be tempered with the availability of assessors and verifiers. The ABs should continue to ensure that the assessors and verifiers recruited by assessment centres fulfil all the relevant requirements. The requirements for the occupational expertise of assessors, IVs, and EVs are set out below, and it will be the responsibility of the SCM NOS Board to monitor their effectiveness and provide any recommendations for modifications.

Occupational Expertise of Assessors

Assessors must meet the following criteria:

1. Current industry experience and competence, that is verifiable and relevant, in a supply chain management role, gained either in employment or in assessment activities. If the latter, the Assessor should be able to provide the relevant External Verifier with evidence of professional development showing that they have maintained the currency of their knowledge of working practices in the sector.

Experience and competence could be evidenced by:

- Curriculum vitae and references
 - Possession of a relevant S/NVQ
 - Membership of a relevant professional institution
 - Continuing professional development
2. Current working knowledge of the supply chain management national occupational standards.
 3. Assessors should hold or be working towards the appropriate Assessor qualification specified by the regulatory authorities. Assessors holding older assessor qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are assessing to the current standards.

The occupational experience must be at a level suitable to the level of the qualification being assessed. To assess NVQs and SVQs at Level 5, the Assessor should preferably have worked at a senior level in an organisation; however, working at managerial level is acceptable. For Level 4 qualifications, the Assessor must have operated at managerial level or above. For Levels 2 and 3, the Assessor must have operated at technical/operational level or above.

Occupational Expertise of Internal Verifiers

Internal Verifiers must hold or be working towards the appropriate Internal Verifier qualification as identified by the regulatory authorities. Internal Verifiers holding older qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are verifying to the current standards.

Internal Verifiers must have some occupational experience of working in or with the supply chain management function in organisations. Internal Verifiers should have a clear understanding of the content and meaning of the SCM standards, and be able to provide advice on the interpretation of them.

Occupational Expertise of External Verifiers

External Verifiers must hold or be working towards the appropriate External Verifier qualification as identified by the regulatory authorities. External Verifiers holding older qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are verifying to the current standards.

There is no requirement for external verifiers to have occupational experience of working in the supply chain sector, but it is highly desirable that they do, and at least have experience in working in related occupational areas, e.g. management. External verifiers should therefore have some occupational understanding of working in the supply chain management sector at a level appropriate to the qualifications they are externally verifying.