

Scottish Qualifications Authority

The following are questions from delegates who attended the Quality Network Meetings for the A and V Units held on the 3rd, 9th and 10th of November 2004

Note: This paper is based on the original questions asked. Answers to questions have been scrutinised by a cross-section of SQA personnel and deemed to be correct at the time of print.

Unit A1: Assess Candidates Using a Range of Methods

1. As part of the planning process, do you have to include health and safety, disruption into work activity and unobtrusive assessment?

Yes, health and safety should be considered in the context of ensuring the assessment environment is safe, the assessor should also remain unobtrusive so as not to influence assessment outcomes. Unnecessary disruption should not be encouraged, however, normal workflow and interactions with others should not cease because of the assessment process. Good relationships between assessors and assessor-candidates can make this process relatively uncomplicated.

2. Assessment plans used for SVQs may not meet the needs of A units. How can this be reconciled or do assessor-candidates need to work with different plans

As working documents, assessment plans already being used by the various occupational sectors provide a natural evidence source and therefore should where appropriate be used as evidence for A1.1. Where these assessment plans do not naturally meet all the requirements of A1.1 then it is understandable why adjustments may have to be negotiated in order to fully meet the planning requirements for A1.1 which is necessary. The assessor-candidate should whenever possible avoid using one-off assessment plans for the purposes of satisfying A1.1.

3. If assessment plans don't cover PCs, can you include supplementary evidence to explain the activity covered?

Yes, although the focus of the A and V Units is very much on meeting PCs through performance, there are PCs where this may not be possible. The ENTO have produced guidance on this which will be made available when SQA guidance is updated early in 2005.

4. Define 'record' in A1.1?

Oral or written evidence from the assessor-candidate.

5. A1.1 Pc (h) 'What support they may need' and 'How does this show up in assessment plan'?

Contributors i.e. witnesses, need to understand what their contribution is expected to be to enable them to provide the appropriate value to the assessment process.

The assessment plan may only show where contributors are to be used and not necessarily the support they require. Support may take a number of forms depending on the existing knowledge and experience of the contributor. Notes of a briefing/meeting or telephone conversation etc could provide the appropriate evidence.

6. A1.1 Pc (j) How do you show real evidence of dispute? Should this be on the plan? 'Linked to A1.1 (j), A1.3 (g)?

A1.1. The initial meeting between the assessor-candidate and their candidate very often provides the optimum opportunity to discuss how difficulties and disputes will be handled. This could be recorded on a SVQ Assessment Contract or similar type of document. The Assessment Plan could as an option also be used, however confidentiality must be considered if this is the case.

A1.3. If there are disagreements on assessment decisions, then records of these can be referred to. If no disputes/disagreements happen, then assessor-candidates should be able to state what the company policy/procedures are.

7. How much detail do you require in the reviews with the candidates which should be updated in the assessment plan (A1.1)?

Just like assessment plans, reviews should be real working documents and a natural part of the assessment process. Reviews do not necessarily need to be lengthy documents, but should be meaningful. At the end of a review meeting, a summary of progress and achievement to date and what the next steps are should be agreed, this informs the updating of current assessment plans and/or the creating of new plans. Reviews should be part of the assessment cycle and not carried out merely to provide evidence for A1. They should be concise and be part of a rolling programme of assessment and review.

8. 1.2 PC (h) types of examples please?

This is about being accountable for your assessment decisions. If inconsistencies appear in the evidence you are assessing, you should be able to resolve the situation and be able to explain your actions/decisions. For example, where a witness statement and a candidate's personal account covering supposedly the same period of time do not marry-up, the next logical step for the assessor will usually involve checking out this evidence, in particular its authenticity, and then make an assessment decision.

9. Clarify 'safe' in A1.1 PC(c) A1.2 PC (d)?

The context of planning for/making a *sound* judgement should be considered in A1.1/2 and point 9 in Knowledge.

The context of *health and safety* should also be considered in Knowledge point 31. The ENTO accept that the use of the term 'safe' needs to be looked at when the standards are next reviewed.

10. Clarify wording in 1.2 (f) – special arrangements?

Special arrangements can vary from candidate to candidate but all are usually centred on ensuring equal access to assessment regardless of circumstances, for example; being available on a night-shift to observe a candidate or by providing a preferred method for gathering knowledge evidence i.e. taping an explanation as opposed to asking for it to be written.

11. A1.3 PC (c) what does this mean?

This PC is about the assessor-candidate making a competent or not yet competent assessment decision.

12. A1.3 PC (e) what does this mean?

If for example the assessor-candidate's decision concludes that the candidate requires more development or needs to gather more evidence in order for them to become competent, then their line manager, trainer, experienced colleague etc could provide a valuable source of advice, support and/or training.

13. A1.3 PC (b) what does this mean?

Assessors should feedback to their candidates at regular intervals. Feedback should be constructive (so as not to damage confidence), accurate and objective, and focused on the assessor-candidate's actions and behaviour rather than his/her personality.

14. Will informal evidence be acceptable for A1.4 e.g. not minutes?

Minutes/action points/a record of meeting are normally produced as result of a meeting (centres should periodically hold meetings as part of their quality assurance arrangements), and therefore a natural source of evidence. However, assessor-candidates do not have to put forward minutes/action points; their assessor can for example choose to attend standardisation meetings and write up a report of the meeting (which could also be video/audio taped). In this situation, it may also be advisable to gain authenticity through witness statements etc.

15. What is meant by the review of evidence in A1.4, is this standardisation or feedback?

It is standardisation but may also provide feedback to the assessors/assessor-candidates whose judgements on pieces of evidence are under review, albeit that evidence may be anonymised for this meeting. This refers to the review of pieces of evidence at standardisation meetings. This entails assessors who are assessing within the same occupational area reviewing previously assessed evidence such as a complete unit or element or a witness testimony etc and reaching a common agreement. Agreements would normally be recorded in minutes/action points/record of meeting which can subsequently be used as evidence by the assessor-candidate for A1.4.

16. Is it acceptable for standardisation to arise as a result of practice or should it be more formal?

In order to meet centre approval criteria, centres should ensure standardisation takes place between its assessors on a planned basis. To be effective, centres should be proactive in providing the appropriate opportunities for standardisation to take place (i.e. meetings with planned agendas) and also be reactive in terms of dealing appropriately with standardisation issues as they arise.

17. Can you give us examples of the four reviews, 2 for each candidate as in element A1.4?

Example: A standardisation meeting held where a previously assessed unit and witness testimony were reviewed. A second meeting included the review of a previously assessed reflective account and another completed unit. This evidence would constitute four reviews.

18. What has to be observed for A1?

The assessor must observe the assessor-candidate providing feedback to one candidate. This is the minimum requirement; the assessor may wish to observe more than just the feedback part of the assessment process which is perfectly acceptable.

19. Independent Assessor – please clarify who this person can be?

20. How independent is the independent assessor?

The independent assessor can come from the assessor-candidate's centre or from another centre. The subject specific internal verifier for the candidate(s) being assessed by the assessor-candidate could also perform this function as long as they also meet the requirements of an assessor as laid down in the Learning and Development Assessment Strategy.

The independent assessor should not be the assessor-candidate's assessor or internal verifier for their A1/2 Unit.

21. Would the Independent Assessor be required to complete an Assessment Plan for the component they intend to assess and should they give formal feedback on their assessment?

Assessor-candidates need to know who is going to be involved in the assessment process i.e. the primary assessor, independent assessor, witness testimony etc, and what contribution they will make. This information is usually contained in the primary assessor's assessment plan which is acceptable.

It should be clear in the assessor-candidate's portfolio via a brief report what the independent assessor has assessed and fed back to the assessor-candidate. The report should be referenced by the independent assessor to the relevant PCs, range, and knowledge.

22. Can the independent assessor assess the same evidence as the primary assessor?

The independent assessor and primary assessor should not assess the same evidence; this would be double assessment and ineffective use of assessor time. If there are consistency issues between the main assessor and the independent assessor, they can be dealt with through standardisation meetings and internal verifier feedback etc.

23. Is an assessment plan the only piece of evidence required to satisfy the requirement for the independent assessment of A1/2?

The ENTO has stated that an assessment plan is an acceptable component. However, this is only an example; centres may choose to put forward other components. It is advisable to contact your external moderator if you are unsure.

24. Why is there nothing on the independent assessor in the SQA guidance or NTO Standards?

The ENTO guidance on independent assessment is included in the Learning and Development Assessment Strategy which was developed separately from the standards and Agreed Common Evidence requirements. Independent assessment was subsequently included in a separate ENTO guidance document developed for the A and V units (included in delegate packs), entitled 'Guidance on Assessment of Assessment and Verification Awards'. SQA's Frequently Asked Questions also provide guidance on independent assessment.

25. What is considered occupational competence for the independent assessor of A1/2?

Their occupational competence should match that required to be a primary assessor for the A Units as described in the Learning and Development Assessment Strategy and in ENTO's 'Guidance on Assessment of Assessment and Verification Awards' (included in delegate packs).

26. Please clarify the difference in roles and responsibilities between the Independent Assessor and the Internal Verifier regarding delivery of A1?

27. In the Learning and Development structure. What is the difference between the Assessor and Independent Assessor?

Assessor or verifier-candidates have two assessors, the primary assessor who should assess the majority of evidence and make the final holistic judgement of competence, and an independent assessor who should assess only a very small part of the assessor/verifier-candidate's evidence (a component). The primary assessor and the independent assessor should not assess the same evidence.

The role of the internal verifier has not changed, the only difference being when an assessor or verifier-candidate's evidence is being verified, the assessment decisions of both primary and independent assessors may be checked.

28. How do smaller centres manage the requirement for independent assessment?

For A1, the independent assessor can assess an assessment plan. Plans can also be sent to the independent assessor as they do not necessarily have to meet with the assessor-candidate (although contact should be made in terms of making assessment decisions and feedback). Therefore, although small centres may have to buy-in or agree reciprocal arrangements with other centre(s), independent assessment can be managed in a cost effective way. The subject specific internal verifier can also act as the independent assessor as long as they meet Learning and Development Assessment Strategy requirements to be an assessor.

29. Awarding Bodies and ENTO have identified evidence requirements. Is this all the evidence needed in A1 Portfolios or do ALL PCs and knowledge have to be evidenced and present in the portfolio? i.e. is there a level of trust that assessors have themselves deemed the candidate to be competent?

By ensuring the evidence requirements are fully met, then the majority of PCs etc should naturally already be covered. Candidates must also be able to provide evidence for those PCs etc not sufficiently covered by their performance evidence. Therefore yes, just like any other competence based unit/award, assessors do need to ensure that the evidence presented clearly shows how all PCs/Scope/Knowledge and evidence requirements have been covered.

30. Is an A1 qualified Assessor the same as both D32/D33 or do you need A2 unit as well?

If you have D32/33, then you have the equivalent of A1 (which encompasses A2).

31. Are there requirements for current D32/D33 assessors to carryout/go through a 'transition course' in relation to the A Units?

In order for centres to update their previously 'D Unit qualified' assessors in line with current assessment practice, it is recommended that they look at the A Units in their entirety as opposed to the differences between the D and A Units as this gives a more rounded approach.

Centres have a few options in terms of 'kick starting' the updating process, for example providing in-house updating workshops, attending external courses, self-study is another option coupled with reflective discussion etc (the ENTO have a publication called "Excellence in assessment and internal verification" which is specific to the A and V Units).

Subsequently, in order to complete the CPD loop, arrangements should be in place to establish whether or not assessment activities have actually been brought into line with A Unit principles.

32. How can a D32 qualify as an A1 assessor in the shortest time possible?

This is a matter between the assessment centre and their assessor-candidates. As part of the assessment process, assessment centres should recognise their candidates' previous experience (which can help shorten candidate achievement time) as well as current competence and development needs. In order to achieve A1, assessor-candidates must prove their current competence meets the complete A1 standard.

33. If a person achieves A1/D32.D33 would they automatically achieve A2?

Yes, if you have A1 or D32 and D33 then there is no requirement to undertake A2

34. What constitutes acceptable evidence for CPD?

Evidence that you have/are keeping your practice up to date as an Assessor/IV of the A units. Updating activities have been listed in the Learning and Development Assessment Strategy. Internal meetings that detail the agenda items and outcomes can also constitute valid CPD activity.

35. The requirement for 2 candidates can be difficult. What thoughts do SQA have to oversee this?

ENTO have made it clear that the requirements to have 2 candidates remain unchanged. It is suggested that small centres might work in partnership to overcome this difficulty. SQA will also consider individual assessment requirements where cases merit it.

36. Is it a bureaucratic as it looks, do evidence requirements include too much centre documentation?

Although the evidence requirements have been written in very specific terms, compared with the D Units, centres have generally found them easier to follow. The A and V Units place more emphasis on assessor and verifier-candidates proving they actually follow and understand their centre's/awarding body's policies and procedures.

There is no requirement to remove and copy all procedural documentation from its source file/folder (although it is important that evidence is referenced to its location), therefore, the focus should be on the quality of evidence as opposed to the quantity.

37. Why is SQA not supplying assessment materials for A1?

The A and V Units are very much performance based and subsequently do not require centres to develop significant amounts of assessment materials as assessors/verifiers will naturally show evidence of their performance by following their centre's own assessment/verification procedures and recording systems. Centres coming forward for approval are required to show how they will develop and support their assessor/verifier-candidates i.e. through induction/training and through providing learning/reference materials. There are a number of publications on the open market to help with this process.

SQA does provide assessment recording materials (candidate log-books) which centres can purchase or alternatively centres can develop their own.

38. How can we formalise existing good practice?

There are plans to provide more guidance and exemplar evidence on the SQA Website early in 2005.

It is also part of the external moderator's role to recognise and provide advice on good practice when out on centre visits.

39. How do we decide where the scope fits with particular PCs?

40. How much range/scope must be assessed?

Scope is applicable across elements, and therefore can be referenced on an evidence/element basis (taking into account the evidence generated for each element). Certain scope items naturally come through more clearly in some elements than others; the emphasis therefore should be on ensuring all scope has been covered by the end of unit.

41. Where can we get a template which gives an indication of what is appropriate CPD?

This point will be considered for a future Quality Network Meeting. A variety of CPD guidance and recording formats can be accessed via the internet. 'The Learning and Development Assessment Strategy' and the 'Employment NTO Guidance on Assessment of Assessment and Verification Awards' provides a list of relevant CPD activities.

42. Principles and concepts; what does number 22 mean when the candidate does not have English as a first language?

The emphasis here would be on clear communication between the assessor-candidate and their candidate. It may for example be discriminatory for the assessor-candidate to talk to this candidate in exactly the same way i.e. pace and level of explanation as others whose first language is English.

Note: SQA candidates must achieve their qualification in English.

43. Knowledge and understanding number 27. What does it mean?

This refers to recognition by assessors/assessor-candidates, that as time progresses, technological advances and external trends etc can influence the way in which 'things are done in the workplace'. This can often become evident in the practices of the candidates being assessed; in which case this could signify to the assessor that they may need to update their own practices through undertaking relevant CPD activities.

44. How best to meet requirements for reviewing candidate-assessors evidence/need for sensitivity?

The relationship between the assessor-candidate and his/her colleague assessor(s) needs firstly to be one of support, openness, professionalism and trust in order to develop an environment in which they can work together effectively. Centres sometimes have a 'code of practice' for their standardisation meetings, to help concentrate attendees on the purpose and desired behaviours such as focused listening, objective feedback and acceptance of decisions by consensus. The evidence under review can also be anonymised.

45. Scope – Do we have to cover each one 'for real'?

Assessor-candidates should cover everything under the heading of 'scope', comprising assessment methods and assessment context. Assessor-candidates must use a minimum of four assessment methods and then provide knowledge evidence of the remaining methods they have not used.

46. Can an EV insist on portfolios being in a particular format?

It is each centre's responsibility to ensure that evidence is effectively referenced and can be located without difficulty. Where this is not the case, or where the evidence recording format could be made more effective then the EV may well make recommendations/action points for centre to consider an alternative format. EVs however cannot insist on a specific recording format.

47. Does portfolio evidence stand alone – or can it be linked to the personal statement?

There are personal statements/explanations asked for in the evidence requirements (sometimes referred to as reflective accounts). If 'stand alone' is referring to the explanations asked for in each of the element evidence requirements for A1.1/2 and 3, then yes each should be sufficient in their own right to meet the requirements for each element if they are of the required quality.

If 'linking to a personal statement' means a description of the assessment process from beginning to end across all of the standards/evidence requirements, then this approach can be taken, however, in this situation, it is important to consider the coherence of the evidence being put forward to ensure the statement entirely encompasses the explanations asked for in A1.1/2/3?

Whatever approach is taken, the evidence should be clearly referenced to show full coverage.

48. What is acceptable evidence for non-SVQ assessment (to use to qualify for A1)?

A self-check has been developed for centres to gauge their delivery against and will be made available via SQA's Website early in 2005. If in doubt, your external moderator should be able to provide you with the appropriate advice.

49. CPD - What records are required: Training Records, Certificates, Minutes, Reports, Learning on the back of certificates?

Many of the above could provide appropriate evidence, the focal point should be the CPD record itself i.e. a record of CPD activities that were undertaken and how they confirmed or updated practice.

To provide an example; if an Assessment Update Workshop is attended, the assessor should subsequently incorporate the principles of what they have learned into what they then do as an assessor, and make a record of this. The CPD record should then follow a cycle; the gaining of information (the workshop) → how knowledge was applied → and finally the evaluation. In this instance, the workshop on its own will not have updated practice (although it may have confirmed practice is still current) and therefore the certificate gained from the Assessment Update Workshop may only prove the gaining of information and attendance.

50. Do we need an assessment plan for A-unit candidates?

Yes, planning is part of the assessment cycle and as such should be applied when carrying out any assessments. It is also good practice and important that assessors of assessor-candidates lead by example.

51. When should judgements be countersigned?

52. What are the countersigning arrangements for Assessor-candidates/IVs?

Countersigning is a requirement where the assessor of the assessor- or verifier-candidate is not competent in the occupational area being assessed or verified by the assessor- or verifier-candidate. This is not uncommon, as the assessors' area of competence is the assessment of the A/V Units. Countersigning should be confined to the units that the assessor/verifier-candidates have assessed/verified as evidence for their A1/A2 or V1. Whether **all** decisions (prior to the achievement of the A or V Units) need to be countersigned is a matter for the Assessment Strategy for that occupational area. It is not an SQA

requirement for all decisions by non-qualified assessors and verifiers to be countersigned as the internal quality assurance system should adequately support all assessors and verifiers qualified or not.

53. What form does the Assessment Strategy take – is it enough to have a copy of the ENTO document in the SQA folder? The Assessment Strategy can be copied and used as each centre sees fit. The important point is that centres can prove that it is understood and applied accordingly.

54. Where can we find information about PDAs?

Information can be obtained on SQAs Website and in SQA FAQs.

55. Can we have workshops on benchmarking using portfolios?

Yes, this particular activity will be considered as an item for a future Quality Network Meeting.

56. Can we have copies of A&V Units on the SQA website?

All approved centres were sent a copy of the SQA/ENTO CD Rom containing the A and V Unit standards and evidence requirements. Additional copies can be requested from the approvals section of SQA. Links to an updated version of this CD Rom will eventually be made available on the SQA Website.

57. Communication between the Lead Body and SQA. There are sometimes problems with delays in addressing issues.

SQA are part of the Awarding Body Forum where the majority of decisions are made in terms of amendments to evidence requirements etc. Communication therefore can be delayed between the time of source decisions and when they can be communicated to centres especially if the action required relates to the updating of guidance, as this has to be done at an optimum time for SQA and centres.

58. Is there guidance available/exemplars for the depth of answers required in the written/oral explanation of assessment methods not covered by performance evidence. You could write an essay on each of validity/reliability, issues.

It is difficult to state exactly how much evidence is appropriate as some assessor-candidates will for example write two paragraphs covering an assessment method which can be sufficient and others will write half a page per assessment method and still require more evidence.

The key is in providing quality evidence and you must be satisfied as the assessor that the assessor-candidate has shown a sound understanding of each assessment method and weighed up the validity and reliability issues surrounding each one.

59. Where would A2 be applicable?

A2 is appropriate for those assessors who normally assess their candidates using observation and a small amount of questioning based on what they have/have not already observed. Generally, SVQ Level 1 is assessed mainly through observation and questioning, as are many craft level 2 SVQs. Guidance on this can be sought from subject specific External Moderator groups and by referring to subject specific assessment strategies.

60. What would be the maximum time allowed for the A1?

There is no official minimum or maximum time, but centres do have to consider the starting point of each assessor-candidate i.e. the experience they already have and the time they require to develop their competence prior to assessment, also the time assessors and assessor-candidates can commit to the assessment process. It is a case of getting the balance right; if momentum is lost, assessor-candidates can take longer than appropriate or even give up; if assessor-candidates are pushed to finish before displaying the necessary competence, then the whole assessment process is undermined and the achievement will be of suspect value to the assessor-candidate, their candidates and the centre.

61. Even though David covered this earlier on his briefing, some providers are still circulating rumours that D32/D33/D34/D35 etc will at some stage in the future become obsolete and all holders of these will have to re-qualify to A & V equivalents. Can providers have anything in black and white stating this is not the case?

It is difficult and possibly unwise to predict future policy. The current position nationally (for all of the UK), is that those who already have the relevant D Units do not need to re-qualify for the equivalent A and/or V Units. This position is reflected in SQA and ENTO FAQs.

62. How much can you change the assessment procedures to meet the needs of candidates e.g. night shift work.

The assessment procedures will remain the same, but in this example, the assessor may have to change their own work patterns to make assessment accessible to their candidates.

63. As a practising V1 who does not actually assess SVQ candidates; would the A1 qualification lapse after the set period of time?

64. Can the A1 entitlement still be kept if only verifying?

There would be no requirement for you to re-qualify as an assessor, nor would your qualification lapse. However, in order for you to practice as an internal verifier for the A or V Units, you need to ensure you have firstly carried out enough assessment and CPD activity to satisfy Learning and Development Assessment Strategy requirements.

65. Is it acceptable for an assessor to contribute to another assessor's candidate's portfolio for the second assessment – are there any other ideas as it is not always practical for an assessor-candidate to assess 2 candidates?

As a contingency, it could be possible for two assessor-candidates to assess the same candidate. Where this is the case, they should assess different units.

General questions and those relating to other award areas

66. Is it required that qualified assessors are annually observed by the IV, if yes where does it say?

This is not a mandatory SQA requirement, although it may appear as an Assessment Strategy requirement for specific occupational areas.

It is recognised that observation can be used as an effective way of monitoring assessment practice and is therefore included in the requirements of V1. It is up to centres to decide on frequency and build this into their IV strategies/procedures.

67. Can witness testimonies be used as sufficient evidence (for PC) on its own?

The assessment/evidence requirements for the units/awards under assessment should provide the necessary guidance on what is acceptable. In general terms, if the witness testimony provided is by an individual who is competent and experienced, then the assessor may well deem this evidence to be sufficient. It is however usual for the candidate to have other evidence such as evidence of a completed product, a personal/reflective account etc to corroborate the testimony.

68. Can expert witnesses be used and what qualifications would they need?

Witness testimonies can be provided by a variety of individuals i.e. managers, colleagues, customers etc. A line manager with knowledge of the standards may provide a more critical judgement than a customer and therefore could be termed an 'expert'. However, regardless of who provided the statement, the assessor should objectively decide on the weighting of each one at the time of assessment.

One way of looking at this is to think of evidence provided by witnesses in a court of law. A non-expert witness is normally asked to describe what they saw or heard and not to pass any judgement on it. An expert witness, whose credentials are scrutinised by the defence and the prosecution, provide evidence not only of what they saw or heard, but also what conclusions they came to and what opinions they had of the situation. It is important therefore that portfolios are clear in terms of who the witnesses are, and whether they have an assessor qualification and/or knowledge of the standards. This will assist the assessor to decide on the weighting of the witness testimony.

69. Is there a maximum number of witness testimonies that an assessor-candidate can use per element?

The assessor-candidate should reach a stage where they are confident to make decisions about the quality and quantity of witness testimony evidence and therefore a definitive answer cannot be given. However, the evidence requirements pertaining to each award/unit should provide some guidance. Your subject specific external moderator should also be able to provide you with advice.

70. A number of questions were asked in relation to simulated assessment environments and the use of simulation as an assessment method.

Simulated assessment environments/realistic working environments

Certain SVQ awards/units can be assessed either wholly or partly in a simulated assessment environment often referred to as a Realistic Working Environments (RWE). In order for this to happen, the SSC/SSB for the relevant sector must firstly provide endorsement for their sector specific awards to be assessed in this type of environment. This will usually be stated in the Assessment Strategy for each relevant sector. The above also applies to Non-SVQ work based awards where an SSC/SSB exists.

Centres wishing to seek approval to operate an RWE, must apply to their awarding body for approval. RWE's should replicate the workplace in that 'candidate/employees' perform the types of job roles expected in employment, working in professionally and fully equipped accommodation which functions as it would in industry; for example, chefs and waiters working in a training and assessment kitchen/restaurant or hairdressers and beauticians working in salons within a college/training and assessment centre - the service being provided in these environments being to paying customers/clients. For the purposes of work based assessment, approved RWE's are considered to be the 'workplace' and similarly, candidates will normally go through a period of development and formative assessment (which can vary in length dependent on previous experience) to enable their assessor to determine their readiness for summative assessment. Once candidates have begun to show competence, they will then be ready for summative assessment. The assessment methods used will be those appropriate to the occupational standards being assessed; the most common methods include observation of naturally occurring evidence, examination of work products, witness testimony, personal accounts, questioning and possibly simulation (where the sector NTO allows it).

Using simulation as an assessment method

SVQs and work based awards are normally built around job roles, encompassing the duties and tasks found in employment settings. It is logical then that the evidence for these types of awards should in the main be naturally occurring; this will be reflected in the methods used to assess these awards such as observation, examination of work products, witness testimony etc.

A number of SVQs and work based awards sometimes include a small percentage of activities that cannot be assessed by observation, for example dealing with accidents or outbreaks of fire. In these circumstances, these types of activities may be assessed by alternative methods such as simulation (if the Occupational Standards and Assessment Strategy for that sector allow it).

Therefore, it is usual SVQs/work-based awards will be assessed using a number of appropriate assessment methods which may include simulation; however, observation of a simulation should not be considered the same as observation of naturally occurring workplace evidence.