



## Assessment Strategy for hospitality NVQs and SVQs

### 1. Introduction

This document sets out the revised Assessment Strategy for hospitality NVQs/SVQs at levels 1 to 3. It replaces the previous version of the Assessment Strategy (February 2006). There are three components to the assessment strategy:

- external quality control, including independent assessment of underpinning knowledge
- requirements for observation, simulation and realistic working environments
- occupational expertise of assessors and verifiers.

The purpose of the Assessment Strategy is for People 1st to work in partnership with awarding bodies to:

- support their quality assurance arrangements for hospitality NVQs/SVQs and encourage standardisation across assessment practice
- ensure NVQ/SVQ candidates are assessed to the national occupational standards
- assure employers that their staff are consistently being assessed in line with national standards
- promote continuous professional development amongst internal and external verifiers and assessors.

The Assessment Strategy has been reviewed in close consultation with employers, awarding bodies, training providers and other stakeholders. This version has been amended to include guidance on the independent assessment of underpinning knowledge. This is an important amendment for the assessment strategy, which has been made primarily in response to employer concerns on the consistency of the assessment of underpinning knowledge, expressed to People1st via the consultation for the Sector Skills Agreement (visit the People1st website for more details). It also responds to concerns expressed by Awarding Bodies regarding how best to ensure consistency of approach in the way that questions are used in the assessment of underpinning knowledge. The independent assessment of underpinning knowledge will provide further standardisation for assessment centres in terms of what is acceptable for use of questions to assess knowledge within the S/NVQ.

The approach outlined in this document will bring the following benefits;

- ensure candidates knowledge is assessed consistently against a common specification
- ensure sufficiency of assessment of underpinning knowledge
- allow awarding bodies to have greater control and standardisation over the use of knowledge questions within centres.

The strategy should be read in conjunction with the current regulatory requirements of the regulatory authorities.

Further information about the N/SVQ and can be found at [www.people1st.co.uk](http://www.people1st.co.uk). If you have any feedback or comments on the Assessment Strategy they can be sent to [info@people1st.co.uk](mailto:info@people1st.co.uk).

## **2. External Quality Control and Independent Assessment of Underpinning Knowledge requirements.**

As a result of reviewing the Assessment Strategy, People 1st has removed the requirement for awarding bodies to sample an agreed quantity of candidates' assessment and verification. This method was removed because it proved to be too inflexible and did not allow External Verifiers to make decisions on what was appropriate for approved centres based on a range of factors in addition to the number of candidates.

As a result of feedback gained from the Sector Skills Agreement, and also information that has been received as a result of the operation of the S/NVQs, we have included a section to deal with the independent assessment of the underpinning knowledge.

### **2.1 Risk assessment and management of centres**

Awarding bodies will support the process of external quality control by:

- operating existing systems for quality monitoring, risk assessment and management of their approved centres following any guidance issued by the regulatory authorities
- supplying People 1st with standardised information on their statistical monitoring, including registration and certification figures, on a quarterly basis.

People 1st will operate a forum for all awarding bodies that deliver hospitality NVQs/SVQs, to support the process of external quality control, by:

- providing an opportunity for awarding bodies to feedback on their quality monitoring activities including any problems found within the hospitality national occupational standards, the assessment of NVQs/SVQs, and with implementation of the Assessment Strategy

- addressing and resolving issues that are identified through statistical analysis and other monitoring activities.

## **2.2 Independent Assessment of the Underpinning Knowledge of the S/NVQ.**

People1st require all Awarding Bodies to develop, or quality assure, questions to cover areas of the S/NVQs at **Levels 2 and 3 only** as identified at Appendix A. This will not apply to the Level 1 qualification. It will apply to each of the Hospitality and Catering S/NVQs at Levels 2 and 3.

Questions will be set to support assessment of the knowledge aspect of all the units within the qualification. Acceptable models for Awarding Bodies to deliver this part of the assessment strategy are as follows;

- Questions and answer guides set by the Awarding Body, delivered and marked by the assessor and then subject to Internal and External Verification

Or

- Questions set by the Awarding Body and marked by the Awarding Body

Or

- Questions submitted to the Awarding Body by an Assessment Centre, checked and approved for use by the Awarding Body against the specification developed by People1st (Appendix A).

In terms of types of questions, it is envisaged that a form of objective test, e.g. short answer or multiple choice, will be used. The models of independent assessment can be used in combination.

Candidates should answer at least 70% of the questions correctly. Those questions answered incorrectly can then be assessed by other means, such as oral questioning, a repeat of written questions or by assessor-set assignments. Candidates achieving under 70% should have access to another set of questions.

Where questions are marked by the assessor, they must be securely retained by the assessment centre in order that they can be verified.

Awarding Bodies will be expected to offer advice and support in the usual way in order that candidates with particular needs are not disadvantaged by the above assessments.

Where possible the questions should be constructed in order that they minimize duplication of knowledge needing to be covered. They must also take account of how

the knowledge is likely to be delivered, and be flexible enough to reflect the variety of environments in which candidates are assessed.

It would be advisable for knowledge statements that are repeated throughout a number of units to be assessed once.

Where an assessment centre brings forward their own questions for use, the following procedure must be used.

Firstly, centres must contact their Awarding Body prior to using any questions with candidates. The Awarding Body must evaluate the questions, in particular in terms of offering coverage of the underpinning knowledge as specified by People1st. The Awarding Body must also be confident that the questions have been written and are being used in a way that does not unfairly disadvantage the candidate. The Awarding Body may refer to People1st for a technical view on coverage if required. This process is subject to the centre agreeing to meet the awarding body terms and conditions, including agreeing to use the questions only as agreed.

Questions and answers produced by organisations other than awarding bodies and assessment centres need to be reviewed for sufficient coverage of the underpinning knowledge. Awarding Bodies should check with People 1<sup>st</sup> that materials developed by a third party are suitable for use. Centres are obliged to inform their awarding body where they are using assessments developed by third party organisations.

### **3. Evidence Requirements**

People 1<sup>st</sup> encourages the use of:

- observation as the primary method of assessment of competent performance
- accreditation of prior learning. Opportunities for this should be maximised by early contact between the assessor and candidate.

#### **Supplementary Evidence**

##### **Simulation**

There are no units within hospitality NVQs/SVQs which can be achieved solely by simulation. Simulation can be used as a supplementary form of evidence where the opportunity for assessment in the workplace is minimal, for example for health and safety, fire and emergency procedures. It should not include routine activities that must be covered by performance evidence. The only unit in the hospitality NVQs/SVQs in which simulation is allowed, as a supplementary form of evidence, is 1GEN1/04 (Element 2).

In the case of imported units, where simulation is acceptable in the evidence requirements, please note that simulation should be used only where performance evidence is unlikely to be generated through normal working practices.

### **Witness testimony**

Testimonies can confirm performance evidence in two ways:

- *Witness testimony*, for example from a customer, supplier or colleague that provides evidence towards a candidate's assessment or
- *Expert witness testimony* that provides powerful evidence of competence, that may in itself be sufficient for an assessor to consider that competence has been proved.

Expert witnesses may be other approved assessors who are recognised to assess the relevant occupational area and level, or line managers or other managers, that may not be approved assessors, but whom the awarding body agrees has sufficient occupational qualifications or experience to make a judgement on the competence of a candidate. Expert witness testimony must be used in line with awarding body requirements.

### **Realistic Working Environments**

Approved Centres must operate a real working environment to provide an opportunity, other than in the workplace, for candidates to gain the full range of competences required to achieve NVQ/SVQ units. The working environment must be compliant with the guidance at Appendix B.

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

Those areas of knowledge that can be assessed by supplementary evidence are indicated in Appendix A.

## **4. Occupational Expertise of Assessors and Verifiers**

People 1st requires assessors and verifiers to follow the requirements outlined in the QCA NVQ Code of Practice and SVQ Criteria and Guidance for Awarding Bodies.

### **External Verifiers**

- External verifiers must have an in-depth knowledge of the NVQs/SVQs they are externally verifying.
- Awarding Bodies must ensure that their external verifiers have sufficient expertise and knowledge of the relevant occupational area to ensure effective external verification. This expertise will have been gained through general operational experience while working within the occupational area being assessed.

- External verifiers should regularly update their occupational competence in the areas they are assessing through a range of Continuous Professional Development.
- It is essential for external verifiers to have supervisory/management skills, inter-personal and investigative skills, the ability to manage and analyse information, hold meetings and make recommendations at all levels.
- It is good practice for external verifiers to hold a qualification in health, safety and hygiene regulations, or alternatively they must have received training in these areas.

### **Internal Verifiers**

- Internal verifiers must have an in-depth knowledge of the NVQs/SVQs that they are internally verifying.
- For internal verification of NVQs and SVQs, where the internal verifier has not yet achieved the D34 or V1 units, all verification decisions must be counter-signed by a colleague who has achieved one or other of these two units. This colleague must have the same occupational expertise.
- It is essential that the internal verifier is from a relevant occupational background and that they have supervisory/management skills, inter-personal and investigative skills, the ability to hold meetings and guide and plan, together with skills in administration and record-keeping. This is a quality monitoring role with responsibility for consistency of assessment to national standards.
- Internal verifiers should regularly update their occupational competence in the areas they are assessing through a range of Continuous Professional Development.
- It is good practice for internal verifiers to hold a qualification in health, safety and hygiene regulations, or alternatively they must have received training in these areas.

### **Assessors**

- Assessors must have an in-depth knowledge of the NVQs/SVQs that they are assessing.
- For NVQ/SVQ assessment, where the assessor has not yet achieved the D32/D33 or A1/A2 units, all assessment decisions must be counter-signed by a colleague who has achieved these units. This colleague must have the same occupational expertise.
- Assessors must have a thorough knowledge of the awarding body's requirements relating to the accreditation of prior learning, achievement and or experience and what constitutes as an acceptable witness / expert witness testimony.

- It is essential that assessors have current occupational competence in the occupational area, and at the level, they are assessing. This will have been gained through a minimum of one years' full time practical experience and kept up to date through on-going Continuous Professional Development.
- It is good practice for assessors to hold a qualification in health, safety and hygiene regulations, or alternatively they must have received training in these areas.

### **Continuous Professional Development**

Updating occupational competence is necessary to maintain currency of skills and understanding of the sector. Continuous professional development must prove that external verifiers, internal verifiers and assessors have an up-to-date working knowledge of the occupational area they work in. Demonstrating continuous professional development by maintaining a record of evidence is considered good practice and could include activities such as:

- updating occupational competence through industrial placement (*within industry but not in a realistic working environment*)
- other forms of increasing and updating competence through internal or external work experience and shadowing (*e.g. within other departments; observing the use of new equipment and technology*)
- qualifications achieved or training courses attended
- maintaining an awareness of changes in sector related legislation
- other relevant CPD activities, for example keeping abreast of sector changes and developments.

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