



Assessor's Guidelines for the SVQ1 Construction Operations and Civil Engineering Services (Construction) SCQF level 4, SVQ2 Construction Operations (Construction) SCQF level 5 and SVQ2 General Building Operations (Construction) SCQF level 5

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About this guide

This guide provides some practical examples of how to assess your candidates for the **SVQ1 Construction Operations and Civil Engineering Services (Construction) SCQF level 4, SVQ2 Construction Operations (Construction) SCQF level 5 and SVQ2 General Building Operations (Construction) SCQF level 5**. You may be able to think of other ways of assessing your candidates and recording your decisions about their competence.

Using assessments based on these examples does not guarantee successful verification — it is still your responsibility to ensure that internal quality assurance procedures are followed.

Introduction

This introduction provides a brief overview of SVQs and how they are assessed in the workplace. If you are already familiar with the concept of SVQs, you may wish to go to the next section.

About SVQs

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are work-based qualifications which set the level of occupational competence for each sector of the economy and are usually delivered in the workplace or in partnership with a college or other training provider. The qualifications have been designed by standards-setting bodies made up of experienced practitioners who represent employers, professional bodies, trade unions, education and voluntary organisations.

Each standards-setting body is responsible for developing national standards which define *what* employees (or potential employees) must be able to do, *how well*, and *in what circumstances*, to show that they are competent in their work.

Each SVQ which a standards-setting body develops has to fit into a broad framework which allows qualifications in the UK and throughout Europe to be compared.

There are SVQs for nearly all occupations in Scotland and they are available at SVQ levels 1–5. SVQs are currently notionally placed in the SCQF as the individual SVQs may be at differing SCQF levels and have differing amount of credit points, depending on the structure and context of the SVQ. SVQs are a means of recognising the skills and knowledge people need in employment, ie job competence. Successful completion of an SVQ provides clear evidence that the learner works to nationally recognised occupational standards.

Each Unit defines one aspect of a job or work-role, and says what it is to be competent in that aspect of the job. To be awarded a full SVQ, learners must achieve each of the SVQ Units which make it up by demonstrating that they are competent in that aspect of the job. The Units which make up the SVQ can also be taken as freestanding awards. Some SVQs or SVQ Units are incorporated into other awards or programmes including HNCs and Modern Apprenticeships.

Explanation of levels

SVQ1 (SCQF level 4)	Competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in the performance of a range of varied work activities, most of which may be routine or predictable. SVQs may be at differing SCQF levels and have differing amount of credit points, depending on the structure and context of the SVQ.
SVQ2 (SCQF level 5)	Competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in a significant range of varied work activities, performed in a variety of contexts. At this level, there will be activities, which are complex or non-routine and there is some individual responsibility and autonomy. Collaboration with others, perhaps through membership of a work group or team, may often be a requirement. SVQs may be at differing SCQF levels and have differing amount of credit points, depending on the structure and context of the SVQ.
SVQ3 (either SCQF level 6 or 7)	Competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in a broad range of varied work activities, most of which are complex and non-routine. There is considerable responsibility and autonomy, and control or guidance of others is often present. SVQs may be at differing SCQF levels and have differing amount of credit points, depending on the structure and context of the SVQ.
SVQ4 (either SCQF level 8 or 9)	Competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in a broad range of complex technical or professional work activities, performed in a wide variety of contexts and with a substantial degree of personal responsibility and autonomy. Responsibility for the work of others and the allocation of resources is often present. SVQs may be at differing SCQF levels and have differing amount of credit points, depending on the structure and context of the SVQ.
SVQ5 (SCQF level 11)	Competence involves the application of skills and a significant range of fundamental principles across a wide and often unpredictable variety of contexts. Very substantial personal autonomy and often significant responsibility for the work of others and for the allocation of substantial resources feature strongly, as do personal accountability. SVQs may be at differing SCQF levels and have differing amount of credit points, depending on the structure and context of the SVQ.

For further information on SCQF go to www.scqf.org.uk.

How are standards defined in SVQs?

All SVQs consist of standards which can be broken down into various parts.

Units define the broad functions carried out in the sector, and are made up of a number of **Performance Criteria**. These Performance Criteria describe the activities which employees have to perform, and will require candidates to demonstrate certain skills or knowledge and understanding. These Performance Criteria may also be called **statements of competence** or **what candidates should do**.

The section on scope of **knowledge and understanding** says what candidates must know and understand, and how this knowledge applies to their jobs.

You may also come across standards containing statements on **scope**. These statements could, for example, list the equipment that candidates are expected to be familiar with and use in their occupational area.

Increasingly, you may see changes to this format as standards become more user-friendly and are written in plain English. For example, there may be some standards containing **Range Statements** or **Evidence Requirements**, but over time these should disappear. You may, however, find that information on the context, nature and amount of evidence which is required to prove competence (which used to be given in Range Statements and Evidence Requirements) is now defined in the **assessment guidance** for the qualification. Assessment guidance is drawn up by the awarding body and is packaged along with the standards to form the SVQ.

Who is involved in SVQs?

There are several roles:

- ◆ **the candidate:** the person who wants to achieve the SVQ (eg an employee)
- ◆ **the assessor*:** the person who assesses the candidates and decides if they are competent (eg a supervisor)
- ◆ **the internal verifier*:** an individual nominated by the centre (eg a company) who ensures that assessors apply the standards uniformly and consistently (eg the supervisor's line manager)
- ◆ **the external verifier*:** an individual appointed by SQA who ensures that standards are being applied uniformly and consistently across all centres offering the SVQ

*Assessors and verifiers in centres will be asked by SQA to prove they have the appropriate occupational competence to assess and verify the SVQ. Occupational competence has been defined by the standards-setting body in the assessment strategy for these SVQs.

Assessors and internal verifiers are also expected to obtain an appropriate qualification in assessment and verification — this can be the Assessor/Verifier Units (the national standards for assessment and verification), or an alternative qualification which SQA also recognises.

The steps involved in assessing a candidate for an SVQ

In deciding whether a candidate should get an SVQ, you will go through these stages:

- ◆ planning for assessment
- ◆ generating and collecting evidence of the candidate's competence in the Units
- ◆ judging the evidence of the candidate's ability and making an assessment decision based on the evidence
- ◆ recording the assessment decision and the candidate's achievement

1 The SVQs in Construction Operations and Civil Engineering Services (Construction), Construction Operations (Construction), and General Building Operations (Construction)

The national occupational standards for the SVQs in Construction and Civil Engineering Services and Construction Operations have been developed by the Sector Skills Council ConstructionSkills and are intended for people in general construction work.

These people may be working as general labourers, ground workers or builders' labourers. They will require skills and knowledge in general workplace safety, the use of efficient working practices, protecting working areas, laying domestic drains, placing and finishing concrete.

The SVQs are designed to be assessed in the workplace, or in conditions of the workplace. Examples of the settings or centres in which the SVQs are likely to be delivered include: construction sites, training centres, colleges/employers and open prisons.

Structure of the SVQs

SVQ1 Construction Operations and Civil Engineering Services (Construction) SCQF level 4 (GD4J 21)

Mandatory Units

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DX9P	4		VR 361	Cut Construction Related Materials
DY32	4		VR 362	Lay Construction Related Materials
DY77	4		VR 363	Prepare Mixed Construction Related Materials
FN2J	4		VR 641	Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare
FN2V	4		VR643	Move, Handle or Store Resources

SVQ2 Construction Operations (Construction) SCQF level 5 (G895 22)

Mandatory Units

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DX9J	5		VR 01	Conform to General Workplace Safety
DX9H	5		VR 02	Conform to Efficient Working Practices

Plus one of these optional Units (all routes)

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DY16	5		VR 360	Establish Work Area Protection and Safety
F009	5		VR 365	Segregate the Area for Highway Works

Plus one of the following optional routes

Modular Pavement Construction Route (three Units required)

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DY2A	5		VR 366	Install Street Ironwork
DY3G	5		VR 367	Lay Modular Pavement
F00G	5		VR 401	Set Out Secondary Dimensional Work Control

Laying Kerbs and Channels Route (two Units required)

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DY3D	5		VR 368	Lay Kerbs and Channels
F00G	5		VR 401	Set Out Secondary Dimensional Work Control

Drainage Construction Route (three Units required)

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DY2A	5		VR 366	Install Street Ironwork
DY10	5		VR 369	Install Mains Drainage Systems
DY9L	5		VR 370	Provide Temporary Excavation Support

Structural Concreting Route (one Unit required)

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DY1P	5		VR 371	Form Concrete Structures

General Construction Route (one Unit required)

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DY35	5		VR 43	Lay Domestic Drainage
DY6X	5		VR 45	Place and Finish Non-specialist Concrete

Excavation and Reinstatement Route (three Units required)

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DY9P	5		VR 171	Reinstate Ground Conditions
DY3T	5		VR 372	Locate and Protect Utilities Apparatus and Sub-structures
DY18	5		VR 373	Excavate Holes and Trenches

General Building Operations Route (three Units required)

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DY3G	5		VR 367	Lay Modular Pavement
DY3D	5		VR 368	Lay Kerbs and Channels
F00G	5		VR 401	Set Out Secondary Dimensional Work Control

Additional Units (not compulsory)

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DY04	5		VR 250	Erect and Dismantle Access/Working Platforms
DX9W	5		VR 396	Direct and Guide the Movement of Plant and machinery
DX8X	5		VR 397	Arrange and Secure Loads
DY6K	5		VR 400	Operate Specialised Power Tools and Equipment
F00Y	5		VR 402	Slinging and Signalling the Movement of Loads

**SVQ2 General Building Operations (Construction) at level 5
(G89A 22)**

Mandatory Units

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DX9J	5		VR 01	Conform to General Workplace Safety
DX9H	5		VR 02	Conform to Efficient Working Practices
DY3G	5		VR 367	Lay Modular Pavement
DY3D	5		VR 368	Lay Kerbs and Channels
F00G	5		VR 401	Set Out Secondary Dimensional Work Control

Plus one of these optional Units

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DY16	5		VR 360	Establish Work Area Protection and Safety
F009	5		VR 365	Segregate the Area for Highway Works

Additional Units (not compulsory)

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
DY04	5		VR 250	Erect and Dismantle Access/Working Platforms
DX9W	5		VR 396	Direct and Guide the Movement of Plant and machinery
DX8X	5		VR 397	Arrange and Secure Loads
DY6K	5		VR 400	Operate Specialised Power Tools and Equipment
F00Y	5		VR 402	Slings and Signalling the Movement of Loads

An assessment strategy for the SVQ

As part of its review of the SVQs, ConstructionSkills has developed an assessment strategy which defines a range of requirements:

- ◆ the occupational expertise of assessors and verifiers
- ◆ a definition of simulation
- ◆ a definition of the workplace
- ◆ information on a model of independent assessment or external quality control

The relevant parts of the assessment strategy are available for download from SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk. Both SQA and centres must comply with these requirements.

Why would people be interested in the SVQ?

People will take SVQs for a variety of reasons: to gain promotion, to prove their job competence, or for personal development. There will be other reasons too. One of the first things to do is to find out why your candidates want to do the SVQ, and to advise them of the appropriateness of the qualification. If anyone is acting as a coach or mentor to your candidates, they might help you to do this.

How do candidates begin?

Choosing the SVQ

You should make sure that candidates get guidance before starting out on an SVQ — they need advice to ensure that their existing job remit, skills, experience, and their plans for progression, are matched to the SVQ selected. It does not have to be you, as the assessor, who carries out the matching process, but whoever has responsibility for this should ensure that the assessment opportunities available to the candidate are also considered.

An example

James had worked as a general labourer for 14 years but did not possess any formal qualifications. He wanted to do a qualification which would give him national recognition of the skills he already had and enable him to join the national construction registration scheme. He had a lot of experience in general construction and ground works, including concrete work and drain laying.

When the company Training and Development Manager matched James's job remit and existing skills and experience with the SVQ, it emerged that James should be able to generate sufficient evidence to meet the requirements of the following SVQ Units:

- ◆ Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare
- ◆ Conform to Efficient Working Practices
- ◆ Establish Work Area Protection and Safety
- ◆ Lay Domestic Drainage
- ◆ Place and Finish Non-specialist Concrete

The manager arranged for an assessor within the company to provide James with guidance on how to collect evidence and construct a portfolio to achieve these Units.

A simulated emergency situation was set up to assess 'safe use of a fire extinguisher' within Unit VR 641 *Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare*. The manager arranged for the assessor to accompany James when he was laying a concrete floor in order to observe and assess him for this Unit. Plans were made to assess the Unit through a combination of observation, questioning and assessment of work products (a section of completed reinforced concrete ground floor) and integrate this with the safety Unit VR 641.

James's job remit would cover all the areas of the SVQ with the possible exception of *Erect and Dismantle Access/Working Platforms*. (There are strict on-site controls concerning who is allowed to assemble working platforms.) The manager therefore made enquiries to allow him to attend a local further education college or training centre in order to meet the needs of this Unit.

All these arrangements were agreed by everyone involved and then written up in an assessment plan for James.

2 Preparing to assess the SVQ

This section offers practical advice on how to begin to go about assessing your candidates for the SVQ. This advice is offered as examples of good practice — you may develop your own approaches to assessing your candidates which also work well.

Your role and your candidate's role

Assessing the SVQ will involve several stages. Both you and the candidate should be clear on your roles in the assessment process before you begin.

Your role

- ◆ ensure candidates understand what is to be assessed and how it is to be assessed
- ◆ ensure the conditions and resources required for assessment are available
- ◆ help candidates to identify and gather evidence
- ◆ observe and record candidates carrying out the activities described in the standards — records should say what has been observed, how it was carried out, and what it demonstrates
- ◆ assess products of the candidate's own work
- ◆ question candidates and record results
- ◆ help candidates to present evidence
- ◆ authenticate the evidence candidates provide
- ◆ judge evidence and make assessment decisions
- ◆ identify gaps or shortfalls in candidates' competence
- ◆ provide feedback to candidates throughout the assessment process
- ◆ record achievement

Candidates' role

- ◆ prepare for assessment — become familiar with the standards, what is to be assessed and how it is to be assessed
- ◆ help to identify sources of evidence and how these could be assessed
- ◆ carry out activities, and/or produce products of own work, and/or answer questions
- ◆ gather and present evidence
- ◆ receive and act on feedback from the assessor

Planning

In planning for assessment, you will find it helpful to meet with your candidate and plan what is to be assessed, in what way, and when and where the assessment is to take place. This discussion can be confirmed in the form of an agreed assessment plan between you and your candidate.

You should treat assessment plans as working documents — they can be updated and changed as you review progress with your candidate.

As you are planning assessment, don't forget to make the most of opportunities to *integrate* assessment. This means planning to assess an activity which draws on the contents of different Units. It can be a practical and cost-effective way of assessing your candidate's competence.

If you are a new assessor working towards your A/V Units (the national standards in assessment and verification) you will need copies of completed assessment plans as part of your evidence.

To help you plan for assessment, we have produced an assessment plan which covers Units VR 641 *Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare*, and VR 45 *Place and Finish Non-specialist Concrete*. You will notice that we have included spaces to enter dates when the assessment plan has been reviewed. Any gaps identified during these reviews should be discussed with your candidates and noted for action in the assessment plan.

Assessment plan

Units: VR 45 Place and Finish Non-specialist Concrete and VR 641 Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare					
Activities	Performance Criteria	Method of assessment/Sources of evidence	Date of assessment	Evidence already available	Links to other Units (PCs)
Placing and finishing a section of reinforced concrete on a ground floor construction.	Unit VR 45, PCs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6	Direct observation of product evidence and questioning	18 May 2011	None yet	VR 02 Conform to Efficient Working Practices — PCs 1, 2 and 3
During this practical activity observation, note will be taken of any other relevant integrated activities including, for example: reading the drawings, preparing concrete materials and reinforcement components, methods used to lift and load materials on to the floor, protecting surrounding areas, keeping working area tidy, working safely and using personal protective equipment (PPE), and taking care of tools and equipment.	Unit VR 641, PCs 1, 2 and 3	Direct observation of product evidence and questioning	18 May 2011	None yet	
Questioning for knowledge and understanding not apparent from performance to be identified from second review					

Assessor's signature: *John Graham*

1st review due: *8 June 2011*

Candidate's signature: *James McNulty*

2nd review due: *29 June 2011*

Date of agreement: *8 May 2011*

Date of completion:

Selecting methods of assessment

The methods of assessment you use should be valid, reliable and practicable.

- ◆ By *valid* we mean that the assessment method should be appropriate to the standards.
- ◆ By *reliable* we mean that the assessment method should ensure consistent results when used with different candidates, different assessors and on different occasions.
- ◆ By *practicable* we mean that the method ensures that the assessment makes best use of available resources, equipment and time.

Before you assess a candidate, you must make sure that the methods of assessment you have chosen to use, along with any assessment materials (such as questions and sample answers), have been agreed within your centre through its system of internal quality assurance. This system is often called *internal verification* — its purpose is to help to ensure that assessment methods are valid, reliable and practicable.

There are both benefits and challenges when you are assessing SVQs in the workplace, or in conditions in the workplace. When you select methods of assessment, you should try to offer the candidate the benefits of workplace assessment and minimise any potential difficulties.

The benefits might be:

- ◆ performance and product evidence will be valid and can be authenticated
- ◆ resources to be used are readily available
- ◆ familiarity with the work area and equipment, so the candidate is comfortable during assessment
- ◆ candidate can progress at his/her own pace

The challenges might be:

- ◆ pressure of work
- ◆ location of workplace
- ◆ all criteria not being met during the assessment
- ◆ candidates moving around sites making it difficult to locate them
- ◆ timing visits for specific assessments
- ◆ candidates changing companies

An example

A candidate, who has to demonstrate how to lay concrete floors and place reinforcement, might agree with their assessor that this will be carried out by observation during the normal course of work. If the assessor is working alongside the candidate, they would be well placed to observe the candidate's performance, perhaps using a prepared checklist, and to question the candidate afterwards.

Methods of assessment

Assessment may involve a range of assessment methods. For SVQs, some of the most commonly used methods are observation, product evaluation, and questioning.

Observation

Observation by an assessor is considered to be the most valid and reliable method of assessment. It can be organised in a variety of ways:

- ◆ working alongside the candidate
- ◆ arranging to visit when naturally-occurring activities are carried out by the candidate
- ◆ arranging for activities to take place

Observation by the assessor can often be supplemented by other types of assessment methods such as questioning. It may be appropriate to ask oral questions of candidates as they carry out naturally-occurring activities. For example:

- ◆ observation of candidate producing product evidence, eg laying a concrete floor, supplemented by questions regarding related terminology and regulations
- ◆ observation of candidate taking instructions, interpreting information, working as part of a team
- ◆ observation of candidate preparing the work area and storing tools and equipment on completion of a work session

Product evaluation

As candidates work towards achieving the SVQ, they will produce evidence in the form of products of their work. The nature of this evidence can vary widely depending on what the candidate's job entails, but examples of product evidence include:

- ◆ a completed concrete floor section produced and finished by the candidate
- ◆ written evidence in the form of an assessment
- ◆ authenticated photographic evidence

Questioning

Candidates have to show that they can meet the knowledge specifications for the SVQs. For these SVQs, knowledge and understanding is specified for each PC. Much of a candidate's knowledge and understanding will be apparent from what they do or produce as part of their work, but this will not always be the case, and questioning can be a useful way of confirming what candidates know and understand.

Questions can be asked in a variety of forms, such as oral questions, short answer written questions, and multiple choice.

You should be careful that the method of questioning does not go beyond the competence required for the SVQ and become a barrier to fair assessment. For example, some candidates may feel more comfortable with oral questions than written.

Examples

Oral questions which could be asked to follow up the observation of laying a concrete floor:

Question: Why did you cover the concrete floor slab with polythene after you had laid it?

Answer: The floor finish could be spoiled very easily by rain, for example, if I didn't protect it.

Question: Why did you put plastic spacers under the reinforcing mesh?

Answer: The reinforcing has got to be held in its correct position as the concrete is placed. These spacers help to do that.

Written questions which could be used to assess Unit VR 45 *Place and Finish Non-specialist Concrete*, PC 3, Scope of Knowledge and Understanding:

Q1 Which of the following lists are **all** methods of finishing the surface of concrete?

- A tamped, floated, compact, brushed
- B tamped, floated, trowelled, vibrated
- C tamped, floated, trowelled, brushed
- D tamped, squeezed, trowelled, brushed

- Q2** Why is fabric reinforcement placed in concrete?
- A to make the concrete set quicker
 - B to enable the concrete to be vibrated
 - C to improve the surface finish of the concrete
 - D to increase the strength of the concrete
- Q3** Which of the following is the most common method of forming the slab edge to a concrete unit?
- A by using a steel beam
 - B by forming a simple shutter
 - C by forming a tapered edge
 - D by using a concrete lintel
- Q4** You need to walk past someone who is operating a mobile crane. You should:
- A run to get past the crane as quickly as possible
 - B try to catch the attention of the crane driver
 - C take another route so that you keep clear of the crane
 - D guess what the crane driver is going to do next and act accordingly

Other methods of assessment

These methods, like questioning, are often used for authentication. See section 3 for more about authenticating candidates' evidence.

Personal statements

You might sometimes find it helpful to ask a candidate to give an account of why they did an activity in a certain way or how they produced a product of their work. This is often referred to as a *personal statement*. You should take care to ensure that by asking candidates to produce such statements, you are not asking them to demonstrate competence beyond what is required by the standards. You should also be selective in the use of personal statements, and make sure they have not been produced as a substitute to a more valid, reliable and practical method of assessment.

An example

The candidate could use a personal statement in Unit VR 43 *Lay Domestic Drainage*. You may not have been able to observe the candidate meeting all the Performance Criteria for laying drains as drains are often backfilled soon after completion. The personal statement would allow the candidate to explain the process and procedures, as well as demonstrating their grasp of knowledge and understanding.

Witness testimony

For practical reasons, you may not be able to observe all the activities carried out by your candidates, but might feel that other people may be able to provide a statement on what your candidates have been doing or producing as part of their work. Statements of this kind are called *witness testimony*, and are often used to support other evidence produced by candidates. If witness testimony is used, you should, ideally, identify witnesses and opportunities for using their testimony as part of assessment planning.

You should bear in mind that the weight of the evidence will vary, depending on the knowledge and expertise of the person providing the witness testimony. You will have to take these factors into account as you make your judgement.

	Strongest	Someone with considerable occupational expertise in the candidate's area of work and who is familiar with the standards. This person may also be an assessor or internal verifier qualified with the A/V Units or 'D-Units'.
		Someone with considerable occupational expertise in the candidate's area of work and who is familiar with the standards.
		Someone with considerable occupational expertise in the candidate's area of work, but with no knowledge of the standards.
		Someone who may be a colleague of the candidate, but with no knowledge of the standards.
	Weakest	Someone with no or little knowledge of the candidate's work or no knowledge of the standards.

Witness testimony is unlikely to be sufficient in itself for a decision about the candidate's competence, and would normally be supplemented by questioning candidates.

An example

In Unit VR 641 *Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare*, candidates are required to 'comply with all workplace safety legislation requirements at all times'. A witness testimony produced by the candidate's supervisor or employer would be very useful, as it could detail the ability of the candidate to conform to legislation in their work role.

Photographic evidence

In Construction SVQs, evidence being generated by candidates is often authenticated by the use of photographic evidence. Established best practice is for photographs to be presented in a natural sequence of events with the candidate being visible in the assessment activity. Exact site locations of the activity should be clearly noted in the photographs with dates and a clear description of what aspect of the particular Unit the photographs are linked to.

Simulation

Simulation is any structured assessment exercise involving a specific task which reproduces real-life situations.

On some occasions, it may not be practical to assess a candidate in real work. Examples might be where the standards require candidates to carry out emergency or contingency procedures, or where client confidentiality is an issue, or where a candidate's job role does not cover all aspects of the qualification.

ConstructionSkills has defined what it regards as simulation, and has specified in the standards when simulation is and is not acceptable. The standards also state when candidates must demonstrate competence in the workplace.

For more details on simulation and what constitutes performance in the workplace, look at the assessment strategy on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

Examples

Two examples when simulation is permitted in this SVQ:

- ◆ PC 2 in Unit VR 641 requires the candidate to demonstrate the correct use of a fire extinguisher. For obvious reasons simulation is the only way this could be assessed.
- ◆ PC 4 in Unit VR 641 allows simulation in demonstrating procedures in case of an accident and/or fire.

Other sources of evidence

Other sources of evidence can be previous experience or learning, case studies or assignments.

SQA's *Guides to Assessment and Quality Assurance* (see section 5) have more advice on methods of assessment and how to ensure that your assessment is valid, reliable and practicable.

3 Generating evidence

The methods of assessment you use should generate sufficient evidence to demonstrate the candidate's competence.

We described earlier the circumstances in which you might choose to use different methods of assessment. Starting on the next page, this section gives you examples of forms which you can use to record and present evidence of:

- ◆ observation (by the assessor)
- ◆ oral questions and candidate responses
- ◆ written questions and candidate responses
- ◆ personal statement (produced by the candidate)
- ◆ witness testimony

There are blank forms which you can download from SQA's website:
www.sqa.org.uk

Observation

For observation, note that the form asks you to record the skills and activities observed. This helps you to make a judgement on how the activity was carried out and what it demonstrates.

Knowledge and understanding apparent from this observation:

James demonstrated a high level of tool skills, excellent organisational abilities and an awareness of Health and Safety matters at all times. He organised the resources he required in an efficient manner, contributed to a safe working environment, and left the workplace in an organised and tidy state in preparation for commencing work the following day.

During his working activities he demonstrated the ability to read and interpret drawings correctly, produced a high standard of work in an efficient manner, and showed good knowledge in the use of other components such as damp-proof membranes and fabric reinforcing with all spacers placed correctly.

Other Units to which this evidence may contribute:

VR 02 Conform to Efficient Working Practices

Assessor's comments and feedback to candidate:

The candidate carried out his work in a very professional manner throughout. He showed good communication skills towards the other labourers in the team. The only aspect of this observation which must be improved was the occasional habit of removing his protective hard hat for short periods which contravened Health and Safety legislation. This was fully discussed and he agreed to avoid this in the future. This will be confirmed on future observations. I finished off by complimenting James on his performance.

I can confirm the candidate's performance was satisfactory.

Assessor's signature: *John Graham*

Date: *20/05/11*

Candidate's signature: *James McNulty*

Date: *20/05/11*

Questions and candidate responses

This form can be used to record any questions you might ask the candidate to establish what they know and understand. You should note the candidate's responses on this form too.

Note that there is a space near the top of the form for you to record when, where, how and why you asked the questions.

Where you want to give the candidate written questions, this form could also be used.

Banks of questions for scope of knowledge and understanding

Established best practice is to use a bank of written questions to confirm evidence for the full scope of knowledge and understanding. These are normally used for each candidate under the direct supervision of the assessor.

Record of questions and candidate's answers

Units: VR 45 and VR 641	
Evidence index number: 2	
Circumstances of assessment: Following observation of candidate performance, the following questions were asked to cover the scope of knowledge and understanding not fully confirmed by my observations.	
List of questions and candidate's responses: Disposal of waste Q: I noticed you were very careful about putting the excess concrete waste/spillage in the skip. Why did you do that? A: You need to be very careful nowadays about this type of thing. It's all to do with the affect it has on the environment, etc. Information Q: I saw that you regularly looked at the drawings. Why were you doing that? A: I was looking at the specification on the drawing for information about where to locate the damp-proof membrane, the reinforcing, and what size of spacers to use, etc. Legislation and official guidance Q: I saw you were very careful when lifting the wheelbarrows full of concrete. Why was that? A: Well it was pretty heavy, and you have to be careful to use proper manual handling techniques — bent knees and straight back, you know!	
Assessor's signature: <i>John Graham</i>	Date: 20/05/11
Candidate's signature: <i>James McNulty</i>	Date: 20/05/11

Candidate's personal statement

If a personal statement is being used as evidence, it should be completed by the candidate. The statement should record what they did, how and why they chose to carry out an activity or produce work in a certain way. Where other people may have been present during an activity and they may be able to provide witness testimony, the candidate should record how the statement links to other evidence in the column provided.

Personal statement

Date	Evidence index number	Details of statement	Links to other evidence (enter numbers)	Unit, PCs covered
27/05/11	3	<p>About a month ago, a load of drain pipes and fittings arrived at the site. The gaffer was off work at a funeral that day so I checked the driver's delivery note and made sure that the correct number of pipes and fittings were on the lorry. I then showed the driver where we needed them placed. On checking, I noticed that there were a lot of damaged pipes on one of the pallets and I brought this to the driver's attention. These were left on the lorry to be returned to the builder's merchants. I also informed the site manager about this to make sure we didn't get charged for them.</p> <p>I made sure the different types of drain pipes were stacked separately and were located as near as possible to the houses where they were required. I also made sure that none of the pipes were causing any obstruction on the site. After they were unloaded, I signed the delivery note and handed it to the gaffer the next day when he returned to work. The gaffer says he will confirm this to you if necessary.</p>		VR 02, PCs 1–3

Signed by candidate: *James McNulty*

Date: *27 May 11*

Witness testimony

Remember when you use witness testimony that it must be capable of being authenticated — even if the testimony itself is being used to authenticate a candidate's claim to competence.

To make sure the witness testimony is genuine, you must ensure that you have a record of who is acting as a witness, their relationship to the candidate (eg supervisor, client), address, telephone number and the date. There are spaces for this information in the form.

Witness testimony

SVQ title and level:	SVQ2 Construction Operations (Construction)
Candidate's name:	James McNulty
Evidence index no:	4
Index no of other evidence which this testimony relates to (if any):	3
Unit:	VR 02, PCs 1–3
Date of evidence:	27 May 2011
Name of witness:	Michael McDermitt
Designation/relationship to candidate:	Site Manager
Details of testimony:	
<p>James has worked under my supervision on a variety of sites for about four years now. I can't remember him ever being off work and I can rely on him under all circumstances. He is one of the top general labourers/ground workers in our company.</p> <p>He recently had to deal with a situation which happened when the foreman, Davie Rice, was off work attending a funeral. A large load of drain pipes and fittings which I had ordered some weeks previously arrived on site that day. There was a wide variety of pipes and fittings in the order.</p> <p>In Davie's absence, James took full responsibility for taking delivery of the pipes, and directed the driver to the various drop-off points around the site. He checked the delivery line, and confirmed that one of the pallets had been badly damaged and many of the pipes were broken. These were rejected and returned to the supplier. The remaining pipes were placed at the correct locations around the site, and James checked and signed the driver's materials delivery line which I received from Davie the foreman the following day.</p>	
I can confirm the candidate's evidence is authentic and accurate.	
Signed by witness: <i>Michael McDermitt</i> Date: <i>27 May 2011</i>	

Witness (please tick the appropriate box):

- holds A/V Award
- is familiar with the SVQ standards to which the candidate is working

Filling the gaps

There may come a time when your candidate has provided evidence for most of the Unit (or SVQ), but there are some gaps. For example, you may find that certain situations, such as handling contingencies, have not arisen during assessment. Often these will relate to dealing with health and safety issues, or unexpected problems with workflow like delays in receiving information from another part of the organisation.

In this SVQ, such gaps are likely to occur in generating evidence for VR 02 *Conform to Efficient Working Practices*.

You may be able to overcome this by simulation and questioning or secondment to another part of the organisation. It may be necessary, in extreme cases, to find another organisation which can provide the relevant experience for candidates to generate the required evidence.

Guidance and support to candidates

At all times during the assessment process — from planning through to making your assessment decision — feedback should be on-going, clear and constructive. Feedback should be given against the national standards by relating it to the evidence provided, including the knowledge specifications.

Where there are any shortfalls in a candidate's competence, you should discuss these with your candidate and make plans for re-assessment.

Judging candidate evidence and making an assessment decision

In judging candidate evidence, you must be satisfied that your candidates can work consistently to the required standard, and that the evidence they have produced is their own. You must consider whether your candidate understands and applies the knowledge evidence and how this links to performance evidence.

Evidence must:

- ◆ be relevant to the SVQ
- ◆ be authentic
- ◆ show current competence
- ◆ be sufficient to help you form a decision about the candidate's competence

Insufficient evidence

You have to judge whether the candidate has produced enough evidence required by the standards for you to reach a decision about their evidence.

Where there is insufficient evidence, you should say this to your candidate. You should tell them that it is not that they are not yet competent — there is simply not enough evidence on which to make a decision.

In this situation, your feedback to your candidates must help them produce more evidence and/or plan for further assessment.

Authenticating candidates' evidence

Authentication is required where you have not observed candidates' performance at first hand.

You can check whether a candidate has produced evidence which they claim shows their competence by questioning them or, if this is appropriate, asking them to produce a personal statement, using witness testimony, or seeking peer reports from other colleagues of the candidate.

An example

Authentication will be required when a candidate has produced a piece of evidence that could on the face of it have been produced by anyone else in a working team. For example, a candidate who was working as a member of a team could claim to have laid a section of drain connections from a building to a sewer (these may have been backfilled soon after completion). This would require a witness testimony, questioning, or some other form of authentication.

4 Recording achievement

You should retain all evidence — clearly referenced — for internal and external verification.

The candidate's evidence is normally kept in a file, often called a *portfolio*. These documents help you and your candidates to collect, present and cross-reference the evidence to the national standards. They are also a means of recording your assessment decisions, and they tell an external verifier what stage a candidate has reached in achieving the SVQ.

In a Construction SVQ, it is strongly recommended that you use these nationally-devised recording documents. If you choose to use your own recording material, this has to be approved by us.

Recording documents do not need to be paper-based — it is possible to use an electronic format for collecting and structuring the evidence. Whatever format you and your candidates choose to use, the documents must show what evidence was generated, the assessment decisions you made, how the evidence meets the standards, and where the evidence can be located. You should avoid photocopying items simply to put them in a portfolio — a clear explanation of where the evidence can be found (for example, in a filing cabinet) may be sufficient for the external verifier to follow it up and include it in the visit.

There are various reasons why record-keeping is so important:

- ◆ it provides a way of tracking a candidate's progress in achieving an SVQ
- ◆ it helps candidates to make claims for certification of their competence
- ◆ internal verifiers and external verifiers use the records to sample assessment decisions
- ◆ it helps us to monitor the quality assurance of our qualifications

If your candidates' evidence is incomplete, or cannot be located, or if there is inaccurate cross-referencing to the standards, there is a risk that an internal verifier or external verifier will be unable to confirm your assessment decisions.

To help you and your candidate present evidence and record your assessment decision, we have provided examples of the forms which you and your candidate might use to compile the portfolio.

- ◆ Completing the Unit progress record
- ◆ Using the evidence index
- ◆ Completing the Unit achievement record

These forms are also used in SQA's portfolio.

Completing the Unit progress record

You should complete this form each time your candidate achieves a Unit from the SVQ by adding your signature and the date next to the relevant Unit.

At this stage, candidates should make sure they have completed the recording documents correctly and that their evidence can be easily located. Only then should they circle the relevant Unit number at the top of the form. This enables both of you to see at a glance what stage the candidate is at in their SVQ.

Unit progress record

Qualification and level: SVQ2 Construction Operations (Construction) — General
Construction Route

Candidate: James McNulty

To achieve the whole qualification, you must prove competence in 2 **mandatory** Units and 4 **optional** Units.

Unit Checklist

Mandatory	VR 641	VR 02							
Optional	VR 360	VR 43	VR 45						

Mandatory Units achieved

Unit Number	Title	Assessor's Signature	Date
VR 641	Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare	<i>John Graham</i>	15/06/11
VR 02	Conform to Efficient Working Practices	<i>John Graham</i>	15/06/11

Optional Units achieved

VR 360	Establish Work Area Protection and Safety		
VR 43	Lay Domestic Drains		
VR 45	Place and Finish Non-specialist Concrete	<i>John Graham</i>	15/06/11

Using the index of evidence

The purpose of the index of evidence is to help you locate and work through the candidate's evidence. It should give you a summary of what evidence the candidate has collected, and where (eg in a portfolio) it can be found.

The index of evidence should be completed by entering:

- ◆ the index number for each piece of evidence
- ◆ a description of each piece of evidence
- ◆ the place or location where it can be found
- ◆ the initials of the internal verifier and the date (if they have sampled the candidate's evidence)

Ideally, it should be candidates themselves (with your support and encouragement) who complete the index.

You must make sure that the information in the evidence index is accurate when your candidates' portfolios are presented for assessment and verification — particularly the information about where the evidence can be located. This is important because we suggest that anything which has been produced as day-to-day work is kept in its normal location, but anything which has been produced through assessment for the SVQ, eg observation checklists, is filed in the candidate's portfolio. In this way, your candidate can avoid having to photocopy work products just for the sake of including them in a portfolio. It also means that evidence produced as a result of assessment is kept safely in a central file.

If the index of evidence is not completed with an accurate description and location of the evidence, there is a risk that an internal verifier or external verifier might be unable to confirm your assessment decisions.

Completing the Unit achievement record

To help you and your candidates cross-reference the evidence to the standards of the SVQs, we have provided records similar to those produced in the SQA portfolio. Use one record for each Unit. The grids should be completed by:

- ◆ entering the evidence index number in the first column
- ◆ giving a brief description of the evidence in the second
- ◆ ticking the relevant boxes for the Performance Criteria (or statements of competence as they are sometimes known)
- ◆ entering the areas of knowledge and understanding the piece of evidence covers

If integrated assessment is used (linking Performance Criteria across different Units) the evidence should be cross-referenced back to the relevant Units.

We have provided a completed example to show how to use the record.

Unit achievement record

Unit: VR 45 Place and Finish Non-specialist Concrete

Evidence Index No	Description of Evidence	Performance Criteria						Scope of knowledge and understanding																
		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6											
1	Direct observation of candidate working in a team laying a concrete floor slab and product evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓											
2	Questions asked after the direct observation and candidate's answers							✓	✓		✓													

Unit: VR 45 Place and Finish Non-specialist Concrete

Notes/Comments

James carried out a wide range of tasks in a confident and assured manner. He focused on each job which had to be done, and then, in a very logical manner, moved on to the next job. He demonstrated a variety of skills and also communicated in a very clear manner to other members of the team.

The candidate has satisfied the assessor and internal verifier that the performance evidence has been met.

Candidate: *James McNulty*

Date: *15/06/11*

Assessor: *John Graham*

Date: *15/06/11*

Internal Verifier: *Joe Duncan*

Date: *15/06/11*

5 Further information

What else should I read?

The publications listed here provide additional information on how to implement SVQs. Details of these and other SQA publications are available on our website at **www.sqa.org.uk** on the 'Publications, Sales and Downloads' section. They can be ordered from SQA's Business Development and Customer Support Team — telephone 0303 333 0330. Please note that there may be a charge for some of these publications.

Assessor/Verifier Units: assessment guidance

External Verification: A Guide for Centres

Guide to Assessment

Introduction to Assessment Arrangements for Schools and Colleges

SQA's Quality Framework: a guide for centres

Operational Help Centre

The Operational Guide for Centres has been replaced by the online Operational Help Centre on **www.sqa.org.uk**