



## **Qualification Verification of SVQs and HN Units: Frequently Asked Questions**

# SQA's Quality Assurance Criteria

## 1) What does ASV and QV stand for in the Qualification Verification Report and what types of information should you feedback under this heading?

**ASV** stands for Approval and Systems Verification. The type of information you feedback may include issues relating to policies that may appear lacking or are not effectively supporting the qualifications being delivered. This information will be passed to a Systems Verifier.

Your feedback may also be related to the previous approval of the qualifications you are verifying e.g. approval requirements that centres are consistently not doing/find difficulty with once they become approved.

**QV** stands for Qualification Verification. The type of information you feedback here will be used to inform future Qualification Verification activities, so could for example relate to the interpretation of Unit Evidence Requirements, problems with achieving certain aspects of Unit Standards –basically any information that can be used by SQA to inform quality improvement.

## 2) What information do I place in the General Information Section for the report?

This section is not mandatory. It can be used for many different purposes e.g. to:

- provide information relating to how the centre have organised their system assessment and internal verification (if it is non-routine)
- outline how the centre plans to develop its qualification provision e.g. from local to national (which could impact on how Qualification Verification is conducted in the future)

## 3) If a centre has very little evidence in support of a criterion, then would I be best to grade the centre red rather than amber?

The only time you would place red against any one criterion is where there is no evidence whatsoever, e.g. there is absolutely no documented evidence of assessment taking place for 4.2. Taking on board that you are establishing if centres will have assessment decisions for you to look at before you visit, there is likely to be, but not a certainty, there will be at least some evidence for virtually all of the Assessment/Verification Criteria.

The degree of insufficiency can vary but lead to the same outcome rating. For example, if in relation to criteria 4.3, Centre 1 shows that **most** assessment decisions were accurately and consistently judged but in Centre 2 only **some** of the assessment decisions were accurately and consistently judged - the QV judgement for Centre 1 and Centre 2 would be exactly the same - amber.

#### 4) If I allocate 'amber' to Criterion 4.3, should I always as well allocate amber to 4.2?

If the reason for allocating 'amber' is in relation to consistency and accuracy in assessment judgements (4.3), this quite rightly also relates to reliability and consistency of judgement (4.2), so there is a clear justification for allocating amber. Similarly, if amber is allocated to 4.3 because the inconsistency and inaccuracy in the assessor's judgement stems from inappropriate methods/instruments being used (4.2), then there is also a clear justification. In summary, it is appropriate to put amber against both criteria for the same evidence shortfall as long as there is a clear justification for doing so.

#### 5) Can you give some examples of Good Practice?

Good Practice goes beyond normal and expected practice and effort. For example:

2.3: Maintaining records of CPD is a requirement for SVQ Assessors/Verifiers. However, if the CPD record not only records CPD activities undertaken but also shows CPD has been identified, prioritised, and planned, then this could be an example of good practice.

4.1: Maintaining documented assessment procedures are a requirement for all centres. However, if those records show assessor(s), who through their continued efforts have exemplified practice that stands out e.g. maintained very comprehensive progress review or feedback records, then this could constitute good practice.

4.3 Assessors must make accurate and consistent judgments – this is expected practice. However, if for example the centre frequently uses a number of different standardisation approaches/exercises to support assessors in the judgments they make, then this could constitute good practice.

#### 6) What is the difference between an action point and a recommendation?

An action point is given when there is **insufficient evidence** available in relation to one or more Quality Assurance Criteria. Centres must address all action points.

A recommendation **is a suggestion** that is given to help enhance a centre's performance in relation to one or more Quality Assurance Criteria. Centres do not need to take forward any of the recommendations given by the verifier.

#### 7) When verifying the QCF Units, should I refer to the Code of Practice?

No, the Code of Practice no longer applies.

## Queries about assessment/verification practice

### 8) What advice do we give centres to ensure they access and use the most up to date Assessment Exemplars?

If centres use an out of date Assessment Exemplar, this will impact negatively on the whole assessment process and External Verifiers will have to reflect this in their judgement against SQA Quality Criteria.

Centres can download the most up to date Assessment Exemplars from SQA's Secure Site. The Secure Site is organised by qualification family – HNs, SVQs and NQs, and then further categorised by occupational area.

Only designated centre staff can access the Secure Site, so you should advise them to find out who within their centre has this access.

### 9) I sometimes find that centres don't have access to all of the relevant Assessment Strategies – where is the best place to locate them?

Sector Assessment Strategies can be found by searching under VQ Group type on SQA's [Sector Web Page](#)

### 10) Is it a requirement for assessment plans to be signed by the assessor and the candidate(s) he/she is assessing?

Evidence reviews and assessment planning are necessary parts of workplace assessment – they confirm achievement, clarify problems/issues and essentially keep assessment on the right tracks and moving forward. So, Qualification Verifiers are looking for evidence that centres actively plan and review assessments.

Engagement by the assessor and candidate in these processes usually ends in both parties agreeing future assessment of evidence. Signatures can be **one** way of showing that agreement (and commitment) has been reached. This is not mandatory, but considered good practice with hard-copy evidence. It is often not achievable with many forms of electronic assessment, so response to emails and text acknowledgement etc can be used as an alternative.

## Questions about Assessor/Verifier qualifications

**11) Why are there two sets of assessor/verifier qualifications, one for the QCF and one for the SCQF?**

Each framework requires qualifications to be designed in a way that meets the framework's specific requirements. The qualifications consulted upon and proposed to meet SCQF requirements did not meet the requirements of the QCF and vice versa.

**12) If I achieve QCF Assessor/Verifier qualifications, would they be recognised if I then went on to assess SVQs?**

Yes, SQA Accreditation provided clarification in a May 2011 Update: 'For the purposes of quality assurance in centres, we will also accept Assessor/Verifier qualifications which have been accredited by Ofqual (which include the QCF assessor/verifier qualifications) where the qualifications are based on the Learning and Development National Occupational Standards'.

Centres are also advised to refer to each relevant SVQ Assessment Strategy for information on acceptable assessor/verifier qualifications.

**13) Is there still a requirement for the external verifier to sample the work of the internal-verifier-candidate for L&D11 as there was with V1?**

There are now a number of options to choose from to suit the internal-verifier-candidate's situation. An endorsing statement is required, but this may come from a Quality Assurance practitioner which could for example be an internal verifier, external verifier or centre co-ordinator. The practitioner should be verifier qualified.

**14) Is TQFE still an acceptable qualification for assessors of SVQs?**

TQFE plus CPD remains one of the qualification options for assessors of SVQs unless specific Assessment Strategies such as the Learning and Development Assessment Strategy stipulate otherwise.

**15) Is TQFE still an acceptable qualification for internal verifiers of SVQs?**

Generally no, the TQFE holder if verifying SVQs would have to work towards one of the nationally recognised IV SCQF or QCF qualifications.

**16) Is it best to qualify as an assessor before you qualify as an internal verifier?**

SQA would recommend this as good practice but it is not a mandatory requirement unless it is stipulated in an Assessment Strategy.

**17) Are TAQA Assessor/Verifier qualifications acceptable?**

This name is sometimes used by English Awarding Bodies for the QCF Assessor and Verifier Units. Where this is the case, then yes they are acceptable.