



Guidance Note: Choosing an appropriate assessment environment in the Oil & Gas Sector to enable A and V Unit achievement

Achieving the appropriate A Units

It is up to each approved SQA centre to identify and agree on the most appropriate A Unit for their Assessor-candidates to undertake. The decision should be based on the type of assessments they would normally conduct.

If the Assessor-candidate normally assesses using mainly observation and questioning, then A2 is the most suitable Unit for them to undertake. If, on the other hand, the Assessor-candidate would normally assess using a number of assessment methods including observation, A1 would be the most suitable Unit for them to undertake.

The assessment of work products is often part of the observation process and if so would (for the purposes of gaining the A Units) be considered as one method of assessment, that being observation. If however, the completion of the product of work was not observed by the Assessor-candidate and therefore required separate authentication, then products of work would be considered as an assessment method in its own right.

Achieving the A and/or V1 Units by assessing/verifying in an appropriate environment

To achieve the A or V1 Units, Assessor/Verifier-candidates must assess/verify evidence generated in:

1. The normal workplace of the candidate (this being the primary evidence source).
2. An approved realistic working environment (RWE).
3. A combination of the normal workplace and an RWE.

The Assessment Strategy for the Chemical, Nuclear, Oil and Gas, Petroleum and Polymer Industries outlines the requirements for an RWE in section two on pages one and two.

The sector has recognised that the assessment of specific SVQ/Units can be undertaken wholly or partially within approved RWE's.

Those SVQ/Units that come under this category are:

- a) Processing Operations: Hydrocarbons (POH) level 1 can be wholly assessed in an approved RWE.

The rationale for approving the assessment of this SVQ in an RWE environment is that assessment for level 1 POH is normally conducted in a training centre as part of an approved training programme such as the trainee technician scheme.

Substituting oil and water in place of hydrocarbons for level 1 assessments is seen as being acceptable on the grounds of health, safety and environment concerns.

b) The POH Units Control Emergencies and Critical Situations (C5), and Contribute to the Control of Emergencies and Critical Situations (C4).

However, the assessment of evidence from the candidate's workplace is also a requirement for the completion of these Units.

The rationale for accepting the partial assessment of these Units in an RWE is based on the fact that the control of emergencies and critical situations form a very significant part of the job roles undertaken by some candidates which could not otherwise be satisfactorily assessed by other methods. Job roles that would come under this category would include Production Operators and Control Room Operators.

Note: In order to meet A and V Unit requirements, Assessor/Verifier-candidates assessing/verifying in an RWE or partial RWE are required to undertake all of the normal approved centre activities as included in the agreed common evidence requirements of the appropriate A/V Unit.

Achieving the A and V Units by assessing/verifying non-SVQ evidence

The A and V Units can be achieved by assessing/verifying non-SVQs. The accreditation bodies of QCA and SQA provided an Accreditation Guidance Note 10 for awarding bodies and centres in relation to acceptance of non-SVQ evidence for the achievement of the A and V Units. The following is an extract from that note:

‘The Assessor and Verifier Units were designed to have a wider applicability within the education and training sector and, as such, the use of evidence from other competence-based contexts to prove competence against these Units is acceptable provided that the evidence is valid and sufficient to meet the requirements of the standards. In addition, assessment must be carried out in the workplace’.

From a centre perspective then, the identification of the A Units as being suitable Assessor qualifications should be based on whether or not assessment naturally takes place in the candidates' workplace and, if so, in enough proportion to achieve the evidence requirements of the A1/2. Similarly, the identification of the V1 Unit as being a suitable Verifier qualification should be based on whether or not internal Verifiers support, monitor and verify Assessors conducting workplace assessment and whether their work is subject to continuous external quality assurance.

SQA has published a self-checklist (**Appendix 1**) for centres on its website in relation to the acceptance of non-SVQs. To access the checklist, from SQA's homepage (www.sqa.org.uk) go to the Learning and Development section (listed under the A-Z index). Under the heading of General Information and Common Queries, select

Assessment and Internal Verification of Non-SVQs. You can also access the Learning and Development section directly, using the following address:

www.sqa.org.uk/learninganddevelopment

Since the publication of Guidance Note 10, a number of A1/A2 Units have been achieved through the assessment of non-SVQs. These tend to be mainly in-company programmes, Customised Awards and Workplace Professional Development Awards/Units.

The sector has recognised that the assessment of specific non-SVQ/Units can also be undertaken in part within an approved RWE.

These non-SVQ Units that come under this category are typified by:

- ◆ Managing Offshore Installations: Controlling Emergencies for OIMs; and
- ◆ Control Emergencies and Critical Situations for Control Room Operators

However, evidence from the candidate's workplace is also a requirement for the completion of these Units.

The rationale for accepting the partial assessment of these Units in an RWE is based on the fact that control of emergencies and management of major emergencies form a very significant part of the job roles undertaken by some candidates which could not otherwise be satisfactorily assessed by other methods. Job roles that would come under this category would include Production Operators, Control Room Operators and Offshore Installation Managers (OIMs).

Centres that have difficulty in deciding whether or not specific non-SVQ qualifications/Units are suitable vehicles to enable Assessor/Verifier-candidates to gain their A/V Units are encouraged to contact Mary Garrity at SQA (mary.garrity@sqa.org.uk)

Additional note about the requirements of assessors of the A and V Units

Where Assessors/independent Assessors for the A and V Units are being proposed whom also work as Assessors and Verifiers in the Oil and Gas sectors, it is important they meet the Assessment strategy requirements for Learning and Development (Ref: Assessor/Verifier Units: Assessment Guidance page 54 and 55).

Appendix 1

Assessment of Non-SVQs (as a vehicle for achieving the A1/2 Unit)

- Does the award allow for the assessment principles contained within A1/2 to be applied?
- Are the standards and evidence requirements for the award clearly written?
- Can the assessor-candidate naturally cover at least 4 methods of assessment including observation (A1), and 2 methods; observation and questioning (A2)?
- Will employees/candidates be assessed carrying out their normal work activities in their natural working environment?
- Are the employees/candidates entered for this award doing it because real development/assessment needs have been identified?
- Is there an effective internal verification system in place (in line with V1) to quality assure the award being offered?

Internal verification of Non-SVQs (as a vehicle for achieving the V1 Unit)

- Does the award being quality assured meet the requirements of the Non-SVQ criteria for A1/2?
- Does the internal verification system mirror the principles contained within V1?
- Is there an effective continuous external audit/moderation system in place to quality assure the work of assessors and internal verifiers?

Note:

The Assessment Strategy for Learning and Development continues to apply to assessors and internal verifiers of assessor and internal-verifier candidates who assesses/internally verify Non SVQs.

Centres who require further advice or are unsure of meeting the above requirements are advised to get in contact with their External Moderator or SQA's Qualifications Manager for Learning and Development.