

Internal Assessment in Social & Vocational Skills

Introduction

This document has been produced to update and replace the November 1995 Guidance on Internal Assessment document. It contains advice on:

- ◆ Assessment Strategy
- ◆ Assessment Sheets
- ◆ Assessment of Evidence
- ◆ Aggregation of Internal Assessment
- ◆ Assessment of Group Work
- ◆ Moderation of Internal Assessment of Practical Abilities
- ◆ Use of Audio/Visual Evidence

A copy of the updated Assessment Sheet has been provided with this document, as has an exemplar copy of a completed Assessment Sheet.

Assessment Strategy

There are several reasons why a clear internal assessment strategy is necessary, the greatest of which is the need to maintain a national standard of assessment among teaching sections within each centre. Of particular importance in a multi-disciplinary course such as Social and Vocational Skills is the need to minimise difficulties relating to internal assessment resulting from staff changes. A clear assessment structure will also support candidates in their efforts to improve performance in the elements of the course.

In determining an assessment strategy, familiarity with the Revised Arrangements is essential, in particular with the Assessment Context (p27) and Introductory Notes (pp28–33) on assessable elements. The successful implementation of an assessment strategy depends on teachers and candidates being able to identify appropriate evidence for retention and this in turn requires a **clear definition** of the tasks contained in each of the Pupil Experiences. A task, which can be a series of activities as well as one specific activity, should generate evidence which clearly demonstrates the candidate's level of performance.

Skills development should be a cumulative process, with candidates being prepared for and set progressively more difficult tasks as they move through the course. The information contained in paragraph 6 of the Appendix to the Revised Arrangements (p36) should be borne in mind. This approach guards against the

risk of under-achievement, which may occur if candidates do not have sufficient opportunities to tackle tasks that demand higher standards of performance. Within Communicative Abilities, enquiries of increasing complexity have the potential to indicate greater confidence on the part of the candidate as the course progresses. Such an approach is of enhanced value where, from an early stage, the assessable elements and criteria have been explained to candidates, thus encouraging personal involvement in the development of their abilities.

Ideally, a well-planned experience will involve candidates in activities which allow them to extend their communicative and practical abilities and which provide valid evidence for summative assessment. However, there may be occasions throughout the course where diagnostic assessment with immediate feedback to candidates is emphasised, and where evidence is not retained for certification purposes.

Assessment Sheets

A blank Assessment Sheet has been provided with this document. Teachers are encouraged to make copies of the Assessment Sheet, preferably in green. An exemplar of a completed Assessment Sheet has also been provided for reference.

An Assessment Sheet should be completed and attached to the evidence used for internal assessment. The evidence may comprise an individual piece of work or a range of pieces. The Assessment Sheet (Page 1 of which is completed by candidates and Page 2 by teachers) will assist in organising evidence, as well as in identifying both the level of performance demonstrated and the level determined initially by the complexity of the task in terms of the EGRC. Credit level can not, for example, be awarded to tasks of General or Foundation level, even if they are well organised or completed in a highly competent manner (ie the level Achieved can not be higher than the level of Task performance or the Level Possible on the Assessment Sheet). The Assessment Sheet can also be used in diagnostic discussions aimed at raising the candidate's awareness of their recent performance and improving future performances.

The inclusion of teacher comments on the Assessment Sheet provides crucial extra detail by referring to the context of performance. Such comments will prove useful at a later stage, when final grades are determined by centres and when external moderators review evidence for Practical Abilities submitted by centres. Teacher comments are also of assistance in the event of evidence submissions for Communicative Abilities, in cases such as absence from the external examination, adverse circumstances and appeals.

Assessment of Evidence

Not every task the candidate undertakes needs to be assessed. Teachers should however ensure that there is sufficient evidence from which to make the selection which best reflects candidates' achievements. In compiling a record of performance in Communicative Abilities, centres should provide candidates with opportunities to accumulate evidence of their performance in both the sub-elements (obtaining information and giving information) in a variety of modes of communication. For Practical Abilities, four or five pieces of evidence drawn from a range of experiences and demonstrating the level of performance will be needed for each candidate. In total this should represent approximately five hours' work by the candidate (Revised Arrangements p22, sections 4 6 1 and 4 6 2).

Since the course is concerned with the acquisition and development of skills, as it progresses and the standard of work carried out by the candidate improves, evidence from some earlier tasks may be discarded and replaced by evidence showing a higher level of attainment. Towards the end of the course, teachers, in consultation with candidates, should select the evidence which in their opinion best shows attainment: One piece of evidence at General or Credit level would not be sufficient to justify a General or Credit level award if the candidate was consistently performing at a lower level.

Normally evidence which is to be retained can be accumulated, as an activity progresses, either as a whole or in separate pieces related to Communicative Abilities and Practical Abilities, while an impression forms of the level (Foundation, General or Credit) of the candidates' performance. At an appropriate time, the evidence can be scrutinised to see whether the impression is justified. The evidence should be considered with reference to the EGRC as detailed in the Revised Arrangements, pages 26-32. A level (F, G or C) should be attached to the evidence.

Aggregation of Internal Assessment

For Communicative Abilities, which is assessed both internally and externally with equal weighting, presenting centres are required to submit an internal grade for each candidate.

For Practical Abilities, which is assessed wholly internally, presenting centres are required to submit an internal grade for each candidate. To ensure a national standard of award, assessments will be externally moderated centrally (see below).

The information contained in sections 4 7, 5 7, 5 8 and 5 9 of the Revised Arrangements should be borne in mind when determining the final grade to be awarded. The assessment should be largely based on work carried out towards the end of the course, and take account of the consistency of performance demonstrated and the nature and degree of support required by the candidate. Whether the candidate gains the upper or lower of the two grades associated with

a level depends on the overall standard of performance demonstrated. A substantial amount of high quality work within a level should result in the higher of the two grades associated with that level being awarded, whereas work which just meets the criteria for a level should attract the lower of the two grades.

The final grade for Communicative Abilities should recognise and reflect a candidate's overall performance within each sub-element and should not be seen as simple averaging.

Assessment of Group Work

Social and Vocational Skills courses encourage candidates to work cooperatively, meaning that they participate frequently in group tasks at various stages during an experience. This does not necessarily imply that work done will have multiple authorship or that group work and assessment of individual candidates' performances are incompatible. The Assessment Sheet must **clearly** identify the individual candidate's **specific** contribution to each task.

Moderation of Internal Assessment of Practical Abilities

Each year, a sample of presenting centres will be required to submit to SQA evidence upon which the internal assessment of Practical Abilities is based. This will normally be limited to the work of candidates, two at each of grades 1-6.

The evidence submitted must be presented in a way which will allow external moderators to decide if the appropriate grade has been awarded (Revised Arrangements pp 22, section 4 6 2). Since this judgement is based on the material submitted, it is essential that the evidence should reflect, as far as possible, all the factors on which the assessment is based. If the task required of the candidate is not clear from the evidence submitted, then details of the exercise set must be included with the evidence. Where the assessment relates to both process and product, there should be evidence of both.

The evidence submitted should accurately reflect the candidate's level of performance. Where a number of teachers have been involved in the assessment of candidates' work, it will be assumed that the assessments have been standardised within the centre using internal moderation procedures.

Where moderators cannot confirm the grades awarded internally, the centre will need to re-assess the work of all candidates not included in the sample. SQA will inform the centre about any necessary re-assessment and the reasons for it.

Use of Photographic, Video or Audio Evidence of Student Performance

Centres may wish to retain and, where appropriate, submit to SQA photographic evidence of candidate performance. Photographs can be very useful in supporting other evidence, provided the criteria noted in A-F below are satisfied. Audio or video technology may be an appropriate means of recording evidence, especially when assessment involves activities such as using the telephone or taking part in an interview. However, teachers should consider carefully the purpose of recording the experience or activity and the appropriateness of using recordings as evidence for the assessment of candidate performance. Any statutory procedures should be followed, appropriate consultations carried out and required permission obtained before recording candidates.

It is essential that when considering the use of photographs or audio or video recordings as evidence, the following questions should be borne in mind.

- A. Will appropriate evidence of candidate performance be provided?
- B. Is the nature of the task evident from the photograph or recording, or will a commentary be necessary?
- C. Can candidate performance be related to the Grade Related Criteria for the element being assessed?
- D. Is the evidence clearly identifiable and linked specifically to each candidate?
- E. Will the photograph or recording give a clear indication of individual contributions to an experience or activity?
- F. Is the quality sufficient to provide valid evidence that can be assessed by the teacher and the moderator?