



Assessment Strategy for SVQs

Port Operations and Supervision of Port Operations

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Assessment Strategy for SVQs in Port Operations

Introduction

This Assessment Strategy supersedes and replaces the Assessment Strategy dated February 2014 approved on 26 February 2014.

Port Skills and Safety (PSS) is the body tasked with setting standards of best practice for port operations.

Working with key stakeholders in this industry, including employers, the HSE, unions and education bodies, PSS has developed a suite of standards covering the activities undertaken by port operatives and their supervisors.

The standards are available to inform a range of applications, including the development of qualifications. The standards are also the basis for Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) in Port Operations and Supervision of Port Operations.

This revised Assessment Strategy is compliant with UK legislation relating to age discrimination and reflects the guidance provided to SSCs/SSBs by SQA Accreditation in September 2013.

The principles are in addition to the regulatory requirements that Awarding Bodies must meet as specified by SQA Accreditation.

Purpose of the assessment strategy

This assessment strategy, and therefore the purpose of this document, sets out the overarching principles for the assessment of SVQs in Port Operations. These principles are in addition to the generic criteria that awarding organisations must meet as specified by SQA Accreditation.

The primary audience for this document is Awarding Bodies wishing to offer SVQs in Port Operations and Supervision in Port Operations. Centres delivering these SVQs should also be aware of, and meet, the relevant requirements of this strategy. The assessment strategy should also be a requirement for other Standards Setting Bodies and Awarding Bodies that import the Port Operations and Supervision of Port Operations National Occupational Standards into SVQs that are not designed primarily for port operatives and their supervisors.

PSS believes that Awarding Bodies are responsible for providing quality assurance processes for the assessment of the standards within SVQs. The Awarding Bodies are in the best position to provide detailed assessment guidance and requirements regarding evidence of competence. However, assessment should be effective without being overly burdensome, and suitably qualified and experienced assessors, internal verifiers and external verifiers must be allowed to apply their professional judgement, whilst ensuring that they comply with the assessment guidance and requirements regarding evidence in a consistent manner.

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Prospective, or approved centres offering SVQs in Port Operations and Supervision in Port Operations, need to be aware of the requirements of this document. They need to see, and to work within the overall documentation, procedures and systems proposed by their chosen Awarding Body for operation of the Ports SVQs.

This assessment strategy will be available for view and to download from the PSS website (www.portskillsandsafety.co.uk).

External quality control of assessment

Adherence to the national guidelines

The quality assurance principles enshrined in national guidelines prepared by the regulatory bodies, if implemented correctly, provide sufficient guidance to Awarding Bodies in matters relating to the quality assurance and control of SVQs in the ports sector. PSS believes that these offer sufficient guidance to Awarding Bodies regarding the quality assurance and control of SVQs in Port Operations.

Should PSS have concerns regarding the effectiveness of an Awarding Body, it has the right to raise such concerns with that body, and if necessary, with the regulatory authorities.

Risk management

An integral part of the ongoing process of improving the quality of assessments is the identification and management of risks associated with SVQ assessment. In recent years, the regulatory authorities and Awarding Bodies have worked together in developing approaches towards identifying and responding to such risks, where the aim is to ensure effective and consistent assessment across individual approved centres. PSS will expect Awarding Bodies to apply relevant risk management systems in the awarding to SVQs in Port Operations, and to deploy resources accordingly to address identified risks.

Awarding Body Quality Assurance

To ensure that common approaches are employed and that consistent, high standards are achieved, all Awarding Bodies offering the qualifications within the Ports Sector Qualifications Framework are required to meet with PSS on at least an annual basis to discuss and address assessment issues. PSS and the Awarding Bodies will seek to improve the quality and consistency of assessment, and will provide the opportunity to identify and address any emerging areas of risk resulting from the performance of assessment centres, and to review external verification activity if necessary.

The aims will be to:

- Facilitate the flow of non-confidential information between PSS and the Awarding Bodies regarding the delivery of the SVQs in Port Operations,

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- Collate information and statistics regarding the uptake of the qualifications for each country,
- Identify trends and developments affecting delivery of the qualifications,
- Provide ongoing review of feedback upon the content of the national occupational standards making up the SVQs in Port Operations and Supervision in Port Operations
- Resolve any issues relating to interpretation of the standards,
- Consider risks arising from the performance of the assessment centres,
- Resolve any issues relating to the definition of occupational expertise of assessors, internal verifiers and external verifiers,
- Act as the arbiter upon interpretation of the assessment strategy.

Each Awarding Body will be expected to make every effort to meet with PSS. It is accepted that an Awarding Body, for various reasons, may need to re-schedule a meeting. However, if an Awarding Body fails to attend meetings PSS may advise the Awarding Body chief executive and the regulatory authorities accordingly. In doing so, PSS would take account of any ongoing discussion with the Awarding Body on issues affecting assessment and quality assurance.

Assessment in the workplace

PSS considers it essential to the validity of the SVQs that performance be assessed in the workplace. All of the units of competence within the Port Operations and Supervision in Port Operations standards are designed to reflect best practice by practitioners in real workplace settings. The standards have been tested to ensure that performance evidence can be collected in a reasonable time and cost. There are no circumstances where performance cannot be assessed by the use of one or more of the established assessment methods including, observation, the scrutiny of documentary evidence and reports, and the use of witness testimony. There are however some circumstances where response to emergencies will form part of the standard or where there may be unreasonable risk involved in demonstrating a skill or task. In those instances the use of simulation will be allowed (see below).

Assessment of SVQs in Port Operations must include observation of the candidate's performance. However, observation by either the assessor and/or an expert witness need not be the only form of assessment. As above, there are several further established methods of assessment, and all are acceptable for use when assessing these SVQs. The use of media such as video and stills photography are wholly acceptable as part of an assessment and evidence portfolio.

Where a candidate is not in a position to provide evidence across a particular unit(s) due to their current assignment or position, they will need to agree upon suitable opportunities to generate evidence, such as through work placement or simulation. This must be planned and agreed with the assessment centre and, if necessary, with the employer at the start of the qualification.

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The evidence provided, together with information gained from discussion with, and questioning by, the assessor, should enable candidates to show that they:

- Have achieved all of the stated outcomes of effective performance,
- Have demonstrated all of the behaviours which underpin effective performance,
- Possess, and are capable of applying, all of the required aspects of knowledge and understanding.

Use of expert witness testimony

Observation of the candidate's performance will include some observation by the assessor and it is also anticipated that observation may also be undertaken by a relevant 'subject matter' expert(s). A subject matter expert, or 'expert-witness', must:

- Be occupationally competent in the activity which they witness and would be considered to be a 'good role model' for the candidate,
- Understand the national occupational standards covering the activity about which they are providing witness testimony.

Use of simulation

PSS believes that the most reliable evidence is generated through work activities occurring naturally in the workplace, therefore simulation should not be viewed as the main source of performance evidence of SVQs.

There are some particular units and isolated requirements within the standards for Port Operations for which candidates may not always be able to produce evidence from the workplace within an acceptable timeframe and for which simulation will therefore be an acceptable form of assessment. Indeed, within some aspects of health and safety, and in dealing with emergencies, there are sophisticated simulation procedures available which may offer an appropriate alternative for the assessment of competence.

It is recognised, therefore, that there will be situations where individual candidates may find it difficult to provide performance evidence derived from their normal working activities. In these situations simulation can be considered as an option. Particular units where simulation may be appropriate are identified below.

If simulation is required, then this must be agreed with the external verifier, who will decide whether the circumstances warrant its use. Simulation should be allowed only when other sources of performance evidence cannot be assessed effectively without undue burden upon the candidate. External verifiers should discuss these situations with the assessor and candidate, and be able to establish a rationale for the decision. The Awarding Body is responsible for the parameters under which simulation should operate in order to avoid the use of invalid and unacceptable practice.

Examples of units where simulation ***must not*** be used include:

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Standards for port operations (level 2 SVQ)

PSSPO112.1	Provide leadership for your team
PSSPO112.2	Allocate and check work of your team
PSSPO113.2	Liaise and develop professional working relationships with third parties
PSSPO114.1	Manage own resources

Standards for the supervision of port operations (level 3 SVQ)

PSSSPO107.5	Monitor procedures to control health, safety and security risks in ports
PSSSPO101.1	Provide leadership for your team
PSSSPO101.2	Encourage innovation in the team
PSSSPO101.3	Plan change
PSSSPO101.4	Implement change
PSSSPO101.5	Promote equality of opportunity and diversity in own area of responsibility
PSSSPO107.2	Conduct an assessment of risks in the workplace
PSSSPO109.1	Organise, deliver and maintain reliable customer service
PSSSPO109.2	Improve customer relationships
PSSSPO109.3	Work with others to improve customer service
PSSSPO109.4	Monitor and solve customer service problems
PSSSPO110.1	Provide learning opportunities for colleagues
PSSSPO110.2	Enable individual learning through coaching
PSSSPO110.2	Enable individual learning through coaching
PSSSPO111.1	Manage own resources and professional development
PSSSPO111.2	Develop productive working relationships with colleagues

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Examples of units where simulation **may be appropriate** include:

Standards for port operations (level 2 SVQ)

PSSPO109.3	Work safely near water
PSSPO110.1	Respond to emergency situations
PSSPO110.2	Respond to a pollution incident
PSSPO110.3	Administer emergency first aid in ports
PSSPO110.4	Respond to emergency situations aboard vessels

Standards for the supervision of port operations (level 3 SVQ)

PSSSPO108.2	Manage port users in an emergency
PSSSPO108.3	Respond to an incident within a port environment
PSSSPO108.4	Administer first aid

Occupational expertise of assessors and verifiers

It is important that assessors, internal verifiers (IVs) and external verifiers (EVs) of SVQs have appropriate occupational expertise to fulfil their roles. This is required in addition to the achievement of the further requirements specified in national codes of practice and encompassed within the regulatory requirements that Awarding Bodies must meet as specified by SQA Accreditation. The assessment process must be credible, and assessors and verifiers perform an essential role in achieving this.

PSS does recognise that the search for experience and ability has to be tempered with the availability of assessors and verifiers. However, Awarding Bodies must ensure that the assessors and verifiers recruited by assessment centres fulfil all of the relevant requirements. The requirements for the occupational expertise of assessors, IVs and EVs are set out below, and it will be the responsibility of the Awarding Body to monitor their effectiveness and to provide any recommendations for modifications.

Occupational expertise of Assessors

Assessors, or equivalent role, for the SVQs in Port Operations must be occupationally competent and knowledgeable in respect of the units they are going to assess. The Awarding Body must ensure that assessors have verifiable, relevant and current industry

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experience and knowledge of the occupational working area at, or above, the level being assessed. This experience and knowledge must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when judging candidate's competence. Assessors' experience and knowledge could be verified by:

- CV and references
- Possession of a relevant NVQ/SVQ or other equivalent qualification
- Membership of a relevant professional body

To assess SVQs at:

- level 3, the assessor must be operating, or have operated, at a supervisory level or above, and/or within a relevant training function with responsibility for training port supervisors
- level 2, the assessor must be operating, or have operated, at a technical/operational level or above, and/or within a relevant training function with responsibility for training port operatives.

Assessors must also:

- be familiar with the National Occupational Standards making up the SVQs which they are seeking to assess to be able to interpret and make judgements on current working practices and technologies within the area of work
- have sufficient time to carry out the role
- receive an appropriate induction to the SVQs that they are assessing
- actively engage in relevant, industry specific continuing professional development activities to keep up-to-date with developments relating to the port operations practice in which they are assessing
- Hold or be working towards an appropriate Assessor qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation the qualification regulator. Assessors holding older assessor qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are assessing to the current standards.
- If candidates are taking the unit H79L 04 Assess candidates using a range of methods this does not act as a substitute for the National Assessor Awards, but it may help in providing evidence towards them. Candidates will still be required to complete the National Assessor Awards identified by SQA Accreditation when working towards their assessor awards.

Occupational expertise of Internal Verifiers

Internal Verifiers (IVs), or equivalent roles, for the SVQs in Port Operations and Supervision of Port Operations must:

- Have an understanding of the role being verified, based upon some occupational expertise and experience in port operations appropriate to the level of SVQ that they are seeking to internally verify, and to the pathway(s) being progressed,

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- Possess, or be working towards, the required qualifications and requirements for IVs as identified by SQA Accreditation the qualification regulator. Internal Verifiers holding older qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are verifying to the current standards
- Keep up to date with developments in relevant port operational practice,
- Have a thorough understanding of the national occupational standards making up the SVQs which they are seeking to internally verify, and be able to provide advice upon the interpretation of the standards.

Occupational expertise of External Verifiers

External Verifiers, or equivalent role, for the SVQs in Port Operations and Supervision of Port Operations must:

- Have some occupational understanding of working within port operations at a level appropriate to the qualifications which they are externally verifying. Whilst there is no requirement for EVs to have occupational experience of working within port operations, it is highly desirable that they do, and they must at least have some experience of working in a related occupational environment, for example, goods handling, marine, and/or passenger handling operations,
- External Verifiers, or equivalent role, must hold or be working towards an appropriate External Verifier qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation the qualification regulator. External Verifiers holding older qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are verifying to the current standards.
- Have a thorough understanding of the national occupational standards making up the SVQs which they are seeking to externally verify.