

**Institute of Customer Service**

**Customer Service S/NVQ at Level 1**

**Assessment Strategy**

**Approved April 2007**

## Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>External Quality Control of Assessment</b>	<b>3</b>
	1a – Monitoring Centre Performance	
	1b – External Verification	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Assessor, Internal and External Verifier Occupational Competence</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Simulation and Realistic Working Environment</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>APPENDIX A</b>	
	<b>Occupational competence of Assessors, IVs and EVs at Level 1</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>APPENDIX B</b>	
	<b>Guidelines for assessing Simulated Activities</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>APPENDIX C</b>	
	<b>Guidelines for assessing in a Realistic Working Environment</b>	<b>7</b>

## Assessment Strategy for the Customer Service Level 1 S/NVQ

This document gives details of the Assessment Strategy for the Customer Service S/NVQs at Level 1. It gives the key requirements for Customer Service Awarding Bodies, External and Internal Verifiers, Assessors and S/NVQ Centres regarding:

1. External Quality Control
2. Assessor and Verifier Occupational Competence
3. Simulation and Realistic Working Environment

### 1. External Quality Control of Assessment

#### 1a Monitoring Centre Performance

Awarding bodies will:

- a. carry out thorough risk assessments of organisations applying to become Approved Centres for the Customer Service Level 1 S/NVQs, following the requirements of the regulatory bodies;
- b. apply quality control management measures appropriate to assess each centre's risk;
- c. ensure that all centres using simulation or a Realistic Working Environment have followed the criteria in this Assessment Strategy as part of centre approval;
- d. ensure that External Verifiers check the use of simulation and/or Realistic Working Environment against the criteria during their first visit;
- e. ensure that External Verifiers continue to check this on every subsequent visit.

#### 1b External Verification

Awarding Bodies will appoint External Verifiers and will monitor all External Verifier practices.

Customer Service Awarding Bodies will facilitate External Verification by ensuring External Verifiers have:

- f. a thorough knowledge of the Level 1 National Occupational Standards for Customer Service, and the ability to interpret them across a wide variety of Customer Service environments;
- g. experience and working knowledge of the operational and assessment processes of the Customer Service S/NVQ at Level 1 ;
- h. relevant and credible customer service experience across the level and breadth of the National Occupational Standards and S/NVQ at Level 1;
- i. knowledge of current customer service practice and emerging issues in the customer service arena;
- j. high levels of communication and interpersonal skills.

To facilitate this Awarding Bodies will:

- k. circulate and disseminate information appropriate to the job role, from the ICS, to all EVs when this supports the Awarding Body communication strategy/schedule;
- l. advise EVs of the availability of the ICS Web Pages;
- m. hold briefings for External Verifiers about the revised Customer Service Standards and S/NVQ at Level 1;
- n. encourage EVs to take part in ICS events regarding the Customer Service Standards and S/NVQ at Level 1 whenever this is felt appropriate;

- o. seek centre feedback regarding the performance of External Verifiers and act on this feedback
- p. ensure that centres have requested feedback from their employers in the feedback process
- q. ensure that External Verifiers follow the relevant regulatory code of practice for EVs and if no code of practice is developed (as in Scotland) Awarding Bodies will develop their own and apply it
- r. ensure that where a Realistic Working Environment is used IVs and EVs carry out a full examination of the working practices and the assessment process;
- s. ensure that IVs and EVs carry out a full examination of any simulated activities where these are used.

## 2. Assessor, Internal and External Verifier Occupational Competence

The table in **Appendix A** shows the ICS requirements for the Occupational Competence of Assessors, Internal Verifiers and External Verifiers at Level 1.

In this table the ICS has suggested some ways in which Awarding Bodies can gain evidence to meet these requirements – these are not compulsory, just a guide. The tick boxes on the right show whether the evidence applies to Assessors (A), Internal Verifiers (IV) or External Verifiers (EV)

## 3. Simulation and Realistic Working Environments

Wherever possible, assessment of all the Customer Service National Occupational Standards and S/NVQ should be carried out in a **real job (either paid or voluntary)**. Where this is not possible this Assessment Strategy does allow for:

- ▶ the use of **simulation** for **units 1, 5 and 6**

To undertake assessment of simulated activities for these three units the Guidelines for Simulation shown at **Appendix B** must be met.

- ▶ the use of a **Realistic Working Environment including work experience and work placement** for **all units of the Level 1**

To undertake assessment in a Realistic Working Environment the Guidelines shown at **Appendix C** must be met.

**APPENDIX A**

The Assessor, IV and EV working at Level 1 must have:		This can be evidenced by:	A	IV	EV
1.	A thorough understanding of the National Occupational Standards in Customer Service at Level 1 with the ability to interpret them within the environments and sectors they are working in	gathering feedback from a variety of centres			✓
		explaining and putting the National Occupational Standards into the contexts they are working in	✓	✓	✓
2.	Knowledge of current practice and emerging issues and changes in the VQ area across the UK	participation in consultations and briefings with Awarding Bodies, DfES and Accreditation Bodies and the ICS		✓	✓
		explaining the differences between the 4 Home Nations	✓	✓	✓
3.	Knowledge of current practice and emerging issues and changes in Customer Service across organisations and industries	gathering feedback from a variety of employers and centres			✓
		attending conferences or workshops where trends and developments in Customer Service are on the agenda	✓	✓	✓
		reading Customer Service publications and articles	✓	✓	✓
		regularly looking at the ICS Website for new developments	✓	✓	✓
		keeping up to date with media news regarding Customer Service	✓	✓	✓
		joining the ICS	✓	✓	✓
4	Experience and working knowledge of the operational, assessment and verification processes specifically for Customer Service S/NVQ Level 1	having a successful track record of assessing or verifying the current Standards across a variety of organisations	✓	✓	✓
		achieving or working towards the Level 1, 2 3 or 4 Customer Service S/NVQ	✓	✓	✓
5	Relevant and credible Customer Service skills and knowledge across the level and breadth of the Standards and S/NVQ to the Level which they wish to assess/verify	gathering feedback from a variety of employers and centres			✓
		curriculum vitae and references/testimonies	✓	✓	✓
6	Formal recognition of achievement of the appropriate Assessment and Verification units of competence, or evidence of working towards achieving these units within 18 months of working with the Standards for Assessors and IVs and within 12 months for EVs. In Scotland all assessors and verifiers should be able to show that they possess formal recognition of achievement of the appropriate assessment and verification units of competence, or show that they are working towards achieving these units of competence or hold TQFE or TQSE.	producing certificates or evidence of working towards these units	✓ ✓		✓
7	Demonstrated high levels of communication and interpersonal skills	gathering feedback from candidates, employers or peers	✓	✓	✓

### **Simulated Activities Guidelines for Customer Service National Occupational Standards (Units 1, 5 and 6 only)**

Simulation is defined by the ICS as any activities where dealing with customers and work activities are carried out through using individuals acting the part of the customer or scenarios which are not 'real' customer transactions.

To undertake the assessment of simulated activities for these three units the following guidelines must be met:

- a. when role playing, candidates and anybody taking part as a customer must have a brief that gives sufficient information for them to recognise the equivalent real situation and decide what they would do and say;
- b. the simulated situation should represent normal and routine experience wherever possible and not exceptional or unusually difficult circumstances that might be faced;
- c. the person taking part in the simulation as a customer must be credible for the situation that is being simulated;
- d. any resources or equipment that would normally be in real work should be available and in working order for the simulation;
- e. candidates should complete the required tasks to the National Occupational Standards and in the timescales that would normally be expected in real work;
- f. candidates should complete the required tasks taking account of legislation and regulation that would apply in real work;
- g. candidates must carry out the simulated activity in a professional manner taking into account establishment requirements such as appearance and dress code, personal conduct, hygiene, reliability and punctuality;
- h. whilst the primary purpose of the Simulation is for Assessment, feedback must be given in a way that builds confidence.

## **Realistic Working Environment Guidelines for Customer Service National Occupational Standards**

### **(allowed in all units of the Level 1 S/NVQ)**

It is essential that organisations wishing to operate a Realistic Working Environment (RWE) create an environment which reflects a real work setting. This will ensure that any competence achieved in this way will be sustained in real employment.

To undertake the assessment in a RWE the following guidelines must be met:

- a. assessments must be carried out under realistic business pressures, using real customers and within a defined service offer;
- b. all services that are carried out should be completed in a way, and to a timescale, that is acceptable in business organisations;
- c. candidates must be expected to achieve a volume of work comparable to normal business practices;
- d. the range of services, products, tools, materials and equipment that the candidates use must be up to date and available. They must enable candidates to meet the requirements of the National Occupational Standards;
- e. account must be taken of any legislation or regulations in relation to the type of work that is being carried out;
- f. candidates must be given workplace responsibilities to enable them to meet the requirements of the Customer Service National Occupational Standards at Level 1;
- g. candidates must show that their productivity reflects those found in the work situation being represented;
- h. the customer perception of the RWE is similar to that found in the work situation being represented;
- i. the RWE is managed as a real work situation.