

Assessment strategy for the NVQ/SVQs in supporting teaching and learning in schools

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Introduction

1. The level 2 and level 3 National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications (NVQ/SVQs) in supporting teaching and learning in schools have been developed following the review of the national occupational standards for teaching and classroom assistants.
2. The suite of the national occupational standards which underpin the proposed qualifications has been revised to incorporate a wider range of functions to address gaps and take account of differences in employment patterns and expectations across different educational settings. Where applicable, standards have been imported from other suites of standards to avoid 're-inventing wheels' and to promote transfer and progression.
3. TDA as the sector body has developed this assessment strategy for the new qualifications in collaboration with sector representatives, awarding bodies and other key stakeholders. The assessment strategy specifies the general principles for assessment and quality assurance of the qualifications.
4. Development of the assessment strategy is based on:
 - an evaluation of current assessment methods and quality assurance arrangements for the NVQ/SVQs for teaching and classroom assistants
 - stakeholder views and expectations about assessment processes and requirements gathered through focus groups and online consultations
 - analysis of assessment methodologies and quality assurance arrangements for other qualifications for the children's workforce that attest to occupational competence
 - discussion and agreement with the relevant NVQ/SVQ awarding bodies.

The assessment strategy

5. In accordance with the requirements of the regulatory authorities, the assessment strategy specifies:
 - the recommended approach to external quality control of assessment
 - the type and amount of evidence to be collected for assessment purposes including mandatory requirements for evidence from performance in the workplace
 - the extent to which simulated working conditions may be used in assessment, and any required characteristics of the simulations, including definitions of what might constitute realistic working environments
 - the occupational expertise requirements for assessors and verifiers
6. The assessment strategy aims to complement rather than duplicate generic regulations, criteria and codes of practice for NVQ/SVQs. It is expected that each of the awarding bodies will ensure that its procedures and those of its approved centres comply with all requirements as specified by the regulatory authorities, including adopting the general principles for assessment and external quality control specified by the sector body through this assessment strategy.

External quality control of assessment

7. External quality control of assessment will be achieved through rigorous internal and external verification processes underpinned by effective risk management. Mandatory membership of an awarding body forum is also required to ensure that any quality control issues are identified and resolved in a consistent manner across all awarding bodies and their centres.
8. External verifiers will be required to sample the work of all assessors and implement rigorous risk management strategies consistently across all centres for which they are responsible. External verification will normally involve meeting candidates to check assessment decisions and not be based solely on inspection of paper based records.
9. Internal verifiers should sample evidence from all candidates and observe each assessor conducting candidate assessments at regular intervals.

Type and amount of evidence to be collected for assessment purposes including mandatory requirements for evidence from performance in the workplace

10. Evidence of candidates' performance should be drawn primarily from work activities that take place under normal working conditions in a normal work environment. Performance evidence should be supported by a range of appropriate corroborating evidence drawn from a variety of sources.
11. Direct observation of performance in the workplace is an essential part of the assessment requirements for each unit. Corroborating evidence can be obtained from:
 - work products
 - oral and written questions
 - professional discussions
 - reflective accounts
 - expert witness statements
 - witness testimony
 - written assignments
 - scenarios, case studies, and 'what if' questions
 - simulation as described below
12. Electronic evidence such as video clips, audio clips and photographs of work products may be used. However, centres must be informed that photographs, images and audiovisual records of children are neither appropriate nor acceptable.
13. Approved centres will be expected to implement a system of initial assessment of candidates and develop an individual assessment plan that should include the accreditation of prior learning and experience where applicable.

14. The expectation for direct transfer of units achieved through other qualifications, including units common to the level 2 and 3 awards and units imported from other sectors, should be reinforced in awarding body guidance to centres.
15. Awarding bodies should promote holistic assessment and sufficiency of evidence. Evidence of competence over time i.e. more than one occasion, is essential although this could be demonstrated through reflective accounts, case studies etc rather than repeated observations of performance.
16. Assessment of candidate performance in the workplace should be undertaken in such a way that the evidence collected for each candidate covers their work with at least two different pupils and/or groups of pupils as applicable to each of the units undertaken.

Simulation

17. Simulation should only be used for aspects where naturally occurring evidence is difficult to gather e.g. child protection, health and safety, and can never be used as the sole source of evidence for any unit.
18. Awarding bodies must ensure a common approach to the use of simulation agreed with the sector body through the awarding body forum.
19. Simulations must comply with the following requirements for realistic working environments:
 - the contingency to which the candidate is required to respond must be realistic and reasonable in terms of its scale and the speed of response required
 - the candidate must be able to demonstrate the actions s/he would take, using equipment and materials commonly found within the school in which they are working
 - information available to the candidate on the nature of the contingency and the response expected must be consistent with the policies and practices of the school in which they are working
20. Centres should have a strategy for assessment agreed with the external verifier, which includes the approach to be taken to the use and nature of simulation. All simulations must be planned, developed and documented by the centre in a way that ensures the simulation correctly reflects what the standard seeks to assess. The use of simulation should be monitored by the external verifier to ensure that where simulations are used, they are based in a realistic work environment as described above. Annex 1 shows the elements where simulation may be used, as agreed with the awarding bodies.

Occupational expertise requirements for assessors and verifiers

Assessors

21. The occupational expertise requirements for assessors are that they should have had experience which involved one of the following:
 - performing the roles covered by the standards they are assessing as an experienced practitioner; or
 - being directly responsible for directing and supervising the work of those who are performing the functions **in schools**; or
 - providing formal guidance or instruction to teachers and/or support staff on the effective performance of the functions covered by the standards which they are assessing; or
 - assessing the predecessor standards for teaching and classroom assistants (drawing on the testimony of expert witnesses where they do not have first hand experience of new functions covered by the national occupational standards for supporting teaching and learning in schools).
22. All assessors should have a sound knowledge and understanding of the national occupational standards and NVQ/SVQs in supporting teaching and learning in schools.
23. Assessors should satisfy the qualification requirements specified by the regulatory authorities.
24. Assessors must have a thorough knowledge of the schools sector and its settings, including current legislative and regulatory requirements, codes of practice and guidance within the home country where assessment is taking place.
25. Assessors should have knowledge of and commitment to the principles and values of the sector, including those of relevant sector for units imported from other areas of practice.
26. Assessors should provide evidence of continuing professional development to maintain their occupational expertise. This will be monitored and verified by the external verifier.
27. Assessors should only assess in their acknowledged area of technical and occupational competence. However, expert witnesses could also be used to cover technical competence requirements if necessary.
28. Assessors may be appointed to assess individual units or whole awards. Where they assess individual units only then there must be a co-ordinating assessor responsible for ensuring that full competence is demonstrated across all the required units for a qualification.

Expert witnesses

29. Expert witnesses could be used to supplement the work of assessors, to address any gaps in the technical and occupational competence of assessors, and/or for confidential or sensitive activities that are not appropriate for assessor observation.
30. Expert witnesses can be drawn from a wide range of people who can attest to performance in the workplace, including line managers and experienced colleagues from inside the school or from other agencies.
31. Expert witnesses should be able to demonstrate:
 - a working knowledge of the relevant national occupational standards
 - experience of working at or above the level for which they are attesting competence, or having been responsible for monitoring or managing those who are performing the functions
 - that they have no conflict of interest in the outcome of their evidence
32. A qualified assessor must assess the contribution of performance evidence drawn from an expert witness to the overall evidence of competence.

Co-ordinating assessors

33. In order that the requirements for the occupational competence of assessors can be met, candidates may have more than one assessor involved in the process of assessment, with each assessing different units or elements of units. Where more than one assessor is involved, there must be a named assessor who is responsible for co-ordinating the assessment for an individual candidate.
34. The co-ordinating assessor will be assessing the candidate in one or more area but will also have the responsibility of ensuring that a clear assessment plan is agreed. This will include details of where specialist assessors and/or expert witnesses will be required and when the specialist assessment should be scheduled.
35. The co-ordinating assessor will be responsible for vetting the selection of expert witnesses including evidence of occupational competence and monitoring their contribution to the assessment process. A register of all accepted expert witnesses must be maintained by the centre and be subject to review as part of the external verification process.
36. A co-ordinating assessor should be responsible for making the assessment judgement for units whose assessment relies extensively on expert witness testimony or where parts have been assessed by different assessors and/or expert witnesses.
37. Co-ordinating assessors must ensure that the best use is made of all evidence that is available to make judgements about the competence of candidates against the standards.

38. It is expected that co-ordinating assessors will work closely with internal verifiers to ensure standardised practice and decision-making within the assessment process.
39. Co-ordinating assessors must be qualified assessors who meet the occupational expertise requirements of this assessment strategy.

Internal verifiers

40. The occupational expertise requirements for internal verifiers are that they should have had experience of working in the schools sector, in a capacity which involved them making judgements as to the quality of provision offered, and must be familiar with the demands and opportunities afforded by work within a classroom environment. This could be demonstrated by:
 - being an experienced practitioner who has demonstrated the competences required by the standards during their professional career, or
 - being a manager or supervisor of those who regularly perform the competences required and who are directly responsible for monitoring the work performance of such individuals, or
 - being a trainer who are themselves occupationally competent and who have direct responsibility for developing the competences required in the standards.
41. All internal verifiers should have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the national occupational standards and NVQ/SVQs in supporting teaching and learning in schools.
42. Internal verifiers should satisfy the qualification requirements specified by the regulatory authorities.
43. Internal verifiers must have a thorough knowledge of the schools sector and its settings, including current legislative and regulatory requirements, codes of practice and guidance within the home country where assessment is taking place.
44. Internal verifiers should have knowledge of and commitment to the principles and values of the sector, including those of relevant sector for units imported from other areas of practice.
45. Internal verifiers should provide evidence of continuing professional development to maintain their occupational expertise. This will be monitored and verified by the external verifier.

External verifiers

46. The occupational expertise requirements for external verifiers are that they should have had experience of working in the schools sector, in a capacity which involved them making judgements as to the quality of provision offered, and must be familiar with the demands and opportunities afforded by work within a classroom environment.

47. All external verifiers should have a thorough knowledge and understanding of:
 - NVQ/SVQ systems
 - assessment methodologies that attest to occupational competence
 - the national occupational standards and NVQ/SVQs in supporting teaching and learning in schools
 - the schools sector and its settings, including current legislative and regulatory requirements, codes of practice and guidance within the home country where assessment is taking place
48. External verifiers should know and understand and be committed to the content and guidance provided in the current edition of the sector body's assessment strategy.
49. External verifiers should satisfy the qualification requirements specified by the regulatory authorities.
50. External verifiers should provide evidence of continuing professional development to maintain their occupational expertise and for ensuring consistency of assessment across all of the awarding body's centres.

Awarding body forum

51. Membership of and commitment to an awarding body forum is expected of each of the awarding bodies offering the NVQ/SVQs. The awarding body forum will meet four times a year.
52. The aims and purpose of the awarding body forum will be to:
 - provide an opportunity to share information and experiences
 - ensure that the standards are being applied consistently
 - identify and resolve any issues arising in a consistent way across all of the awarding bodies and their centres
 - provide information and statistics about take-up and completion, which can be used by the sector body to identify any potential problem areas within the standards and agree appropriate remedial action
 - disseminate any updated information through the awarding bodies to the approved centres delivering the qualifications based on the national occupational standards
 - contribute to incremental review of the national occupational standards and qualifications
 - ensure vigilant evaluation and consequent revision of the standards and NVQ/SVQs
 - provide information and feedback on the assessment strategy, indicating when or where changes might need to be made

Annex 1 The use of simulation

As agreed with the awarding bodies simulation may only be used in the following elements from the units of competence for the NVQ/SVQs in supporting teaching and learning in schools.

Level 2 NVQ/SVQ in supporting teaching and learning in schools

- STL3.2 Dealing with accident, emergencies and illness
- STL3.3 Support the safeguarding of children from abuse
- STL5.1 Maintain working relationships with colleagues
 - P6 address and handle in a constructive manner any issues in your relations which can be resolved by your own actions
- STL17.2 Implement and maintain invigilation requirements
 - P4d follow the centre's procedures for dealing with any health, safety or security emergencies

Level 3 NVQ/SVQ in supporting teaching and learning in schools

- STL3.2 Dealing with accident, emergencies and illness
- STL3.3 Support the safeguarding of children from abuse
- STL17.2 Implement and maintain invigilation requirements
 - P4d follow the centre's procedures for dealing with any health, safety or security emergencies
- STL19.1 Implement agreed behaviour management strategies
 - P7 recognise and respond appropriately to risks to yourself and/or others during episodes of challenging behaviour
- STL21.1 Contribute to effective team practice
 - P8 address and handle in a constructive manner any issues in the team which can be resolved by your own actions