



Customised Awards Handbook

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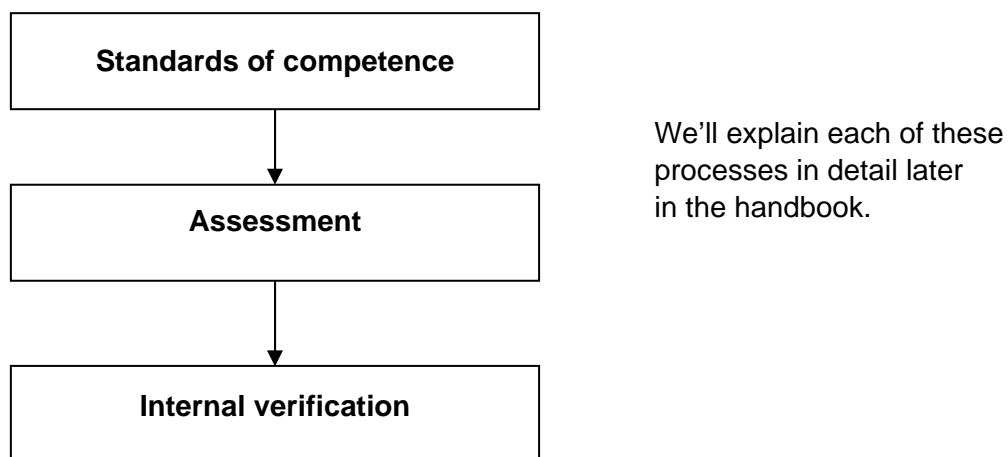
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Introduction: What is a Customised Award?

A Customised Award is a vocational qualification which has been tailored to meet the skills needs of an individual company. The awards can be developed in any occupational area and at any level — from the most junior to the most senior. SQA staff will work with your company's own specialists to develop an award which matches your company's requirements and meets SQA's standards. Employees achieving a Customised Award will get a certificate awarded by SQA — a body of international standing and reputation.

Briefly, the way Customised Awards work is like this: the standards of competence a Customised Award is based on define the skills a person needs in a job role. An employee doing a Customised Award gathers evidence of his or her competence, and this evidence is assessed against the standards. To make sure that this is done consistently and fairly, there is a quality assurance process called internal verification.



Competence and vocational qualifications

Competence is defined simply as the ability to perform activities to the required standards. To be competent in employment, employees must have the experience, skills, knowledge and attitude they need, and the ability to apply them in their job.

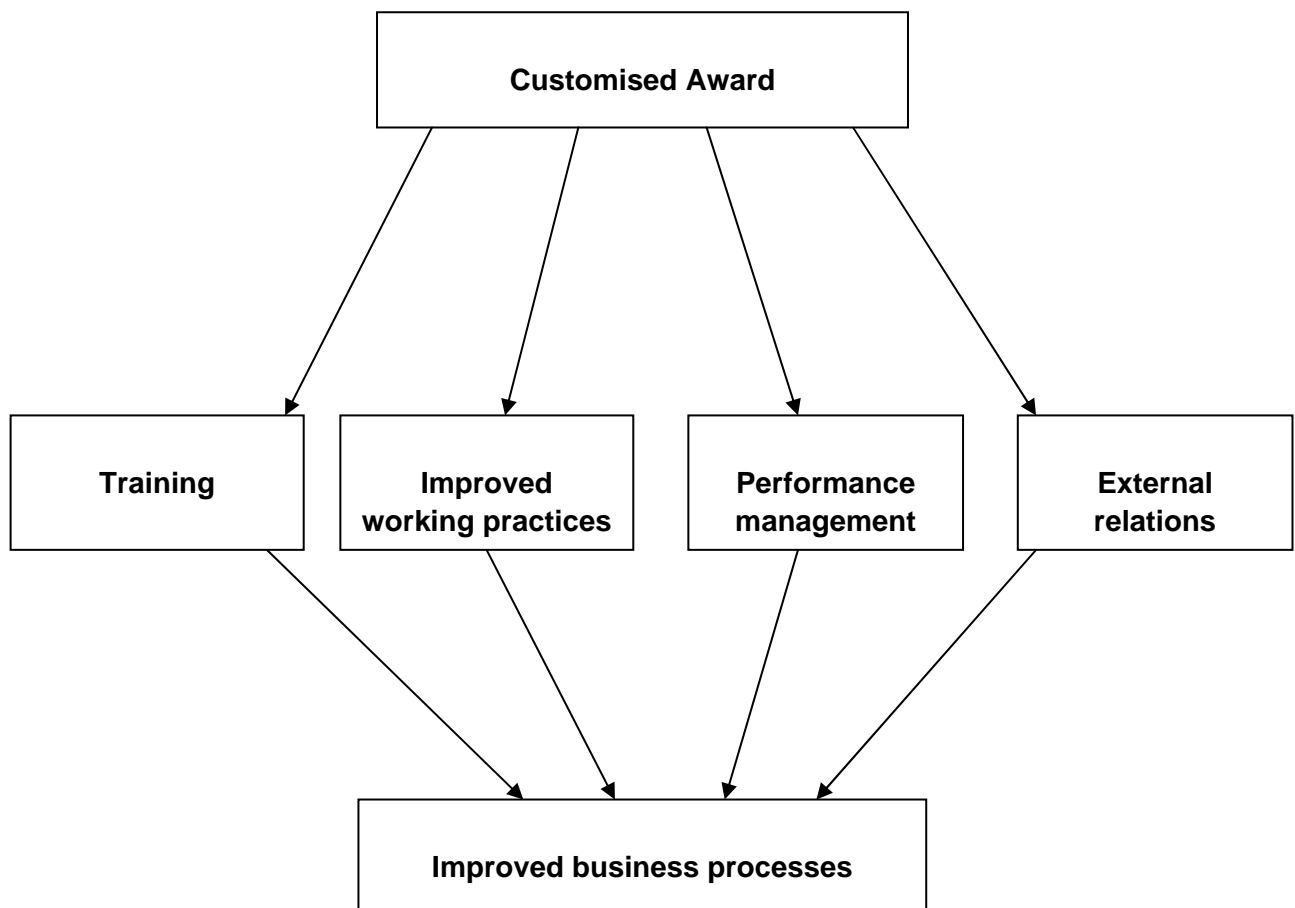
Work-based vocational qualifications are benchmarks of competence which measure the skills of employees as they carry out their normal work activities. They assess performance in the workplace (unlike training programmes or academic qualifications).

The benefits of Customised Awards

A Customised Award can be integrated with your company's existing business and staff development processes. Used in this way, it can offer real benefits, for example:

- ◆ helping you achieve business objectives
- ◆ increasing skills levels and improving working practices
- ◆ assisting the management and development of human resource functions
- ◆ providing recognition and development opportunities for employees
- ◆ providing levelling in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

Areas in which Customised Awards can be of real benefit to your business include: training, improved working practices, performance management, and external relations.



How Customised Awards can help

Standards of competence can help a company to identify critical skills areas, training needs, and the resources required for training and development. They can also be used for setting objective targets for training programmes and to provide a measure with which to evaluate both internal and external training outcomes.

They can also act as a vehicle for change and help a company to: standardise working control, increase productivity and effectiveness in the use of staff resources, and introduce new working practices such as multi-skilling and team-based working.

A Customised Award can provide a framework for managing employees' performance. It can be used to improve motivation and employee relations, to provide an objective means of performance measurement, and to assist with the introduction of new organisation structures and pay arrangements. Standards of competence can also act as a benchmark for recruitment, job descriptions, and appraisal systems.

A Customised Award can help a company to meet regulatory or contractual requirements and to demonstrate the competence of its employees to external parties. It can also enhance a company's corporate image and provide a competitive advantage.

Getting started

Many companies adopt a phased approach to Customised Awards, with specific work areas and occupational roles being selected for initial involvement. The areas and roles chosen will usually be determined by the company's business needs — for example, meeting the requirements of a contract, of a client or a partner, introducing new staffing arrangements, reducing staff turnover, or reducing product wastage.

Developing a Customised Award will normally involve an initial review, which might include:

- ◆ defining the skills required to meet the company's business objectives
- ◆ identifying influencing factors, such as contractual and regulatory requirements
- ◆ reviewing current competence levels, and staff development, training and appraisal systems
- ◆ identifying who will benefit and how
- ◆ assessing the impact of the award on working patterns and employee relations
- ◆ identifying links with other quality initiatives such as ISO standards and Investors in People
- ◆ identifying whether inclusion in the SCQF is relevant or important

Following this review, an action plan can be prepared, addressing issues such as:

- ◆ the content and structure of the Customised Award
- ◆ how assessment and internal verification will be undertaken
- ◆ the physical and human resources needed
- ◆ training and development requirements
- ◆ timescales, and communication and implementation strategy
- ◆ resources and sources of external support
- ◆ how the success of the Customised Award will be measured

The key participants

The success of a Customised Award depends on gaining the acceptance and commitment of both the management and the workforce in a company. It requires co-operation and motivation to progress from the initial idea to final implementation. These are the people who will be involved:

Management: a senior person who can allocate resources (and ensure that the award is effectively integrated with the company's business) should take responsibility for the award.

Employees: the members of the workforce whose performance in the workplace is to be assessed (usually referred to as 'candidates'). They should be aware of the advantages that completing the Customised Award will bring them.

Assessors: responsible for making assessment judgements about the competence of individual candidates against the standards of competence for the Customised Award. They need to be technically competent, and competent as assessors (they need to have had appropriate training).

Internal verifiers: responsible for making sure that assessors apply the standards of competence correctly and consistently. They need to understand the occupational area, and be competent as verifiers (they need to have had appropriate training).

Co-ordinator: responsible for the efficient running and quality assurance of a Customised Award programme, and for communication with SQA. The co-ordinator may also be an internal verifier or an assessor.

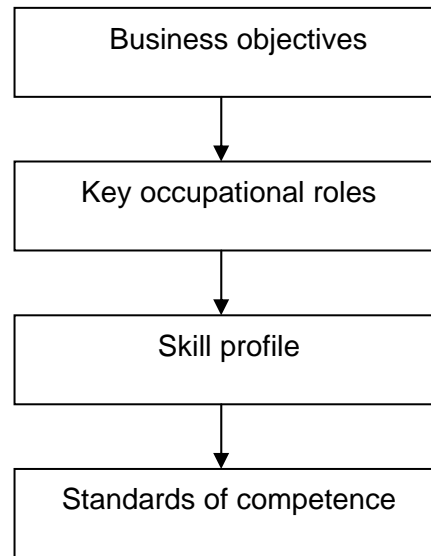
There are more detailed descriptions of these roles later.

Standards of competence

Development steps

The core of a Customised Award is a set of standards of competence. The key steps in developing standards for an award are:

- ◆ identifying key occupational roles required to meet business objectives
- ◆ identifying the skills required by each occupational role
- ◆ developing standards of competence
- ◆ deciding whether the qualification needs to be allocated to an SCQF level

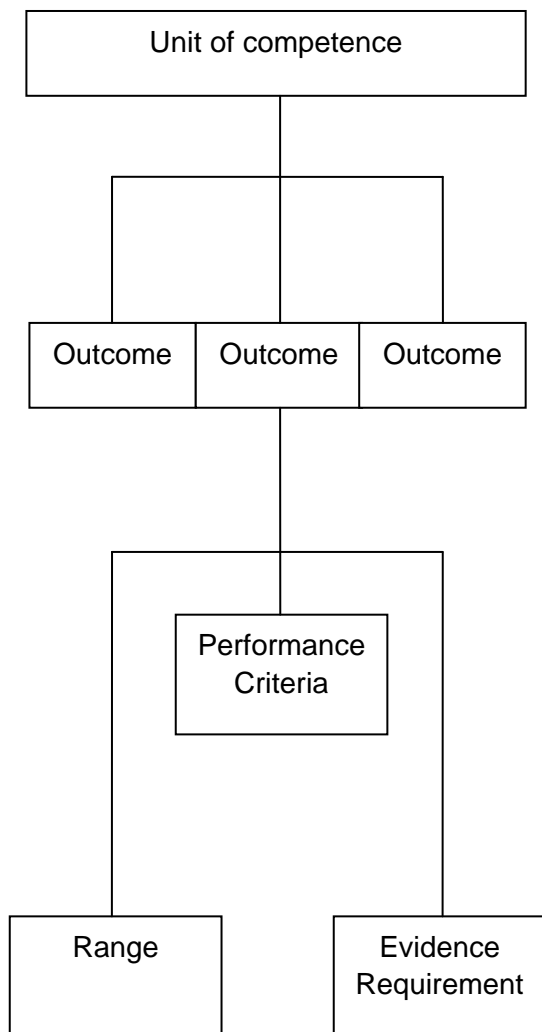


Units of competence

Standards of competence are grouped into Units which describe key areas of work. A Unit of competence will be made up of:

- ◆ **Outcomes** which specify the activities that candidates have to perform, ie *what* they have to do
- ◆ **Performance Criteria** which describe the standards to which the activities described in the Outcome have to be performed, ie *how well* candidates have to do the activities
- ◆ **Range** which explains the range of contexts and situations in which the activities have to be performed
- ◆ **Evidence Requirements** which specify the *kind* of evidence, and *how much* of it that is required to show that the candidate is competent — this may include performance evidence and knowledge evidence

On the next page, there's an example of the way this might work in context — it's a hypothetical Customised Award covering the maintenance and repair of musical instruments.



The Units of competence might be:

- ◆ Repair musical instruments
- ◆ Maintain musical instruments

These Units are broken down into Outcomes. The first Unit, for instance, includes the Outcomes:

- ◆ Identify areas of wear and damage on musical instruments
- ◆ Carry out repairs on selected musical instruments

The Performance Criteria for the second Outcome, which describe how well the task the Outcome covers has to be carried out, are:

- ◆ The nature of the repair to be carried out on the instrument is described correctly, indicating the tools and material required to carry out the repair.
- ◆ The tools and materials are selected correctly according to the nature of the repair work to be carried out.
- ◆ The repair on the musical instrument is completed and checked to ensure good working order.

The Range for the Outcomes specifies the following circumstances:

- ◆ Musical instruments: stringed; wind; brass; percussion

The Evidence Requirements for the Outcome, setting out the nature and amount of evidence which candidates will need to show that they are competent, are:

- ◆ Written and/or oral evidence of the candidates' ability to identify a fault and describe the nature of the repair to be carried out.
- ◆ Evidence of actual performance is required to show that the candidate can carry out at least two repairs on musical instruments. This evidence should cover at least two classes in the Range.
- ◆ Additional evidence must be provided to show that the candidate could identify the fault, describe the nature of the repair, and carry out a repair on each of the remaining classes in the Range.

Customised Awards can be based on a combination of existing SQA National Units and/or new Units developed specifically for a company. We will help companies to match their requirements to National Units and/or develop new Units as required.

If your company has existing standards in place, we will review and validate them (ie quality assure them — there's an explanation of this in the section 'SQA's role').

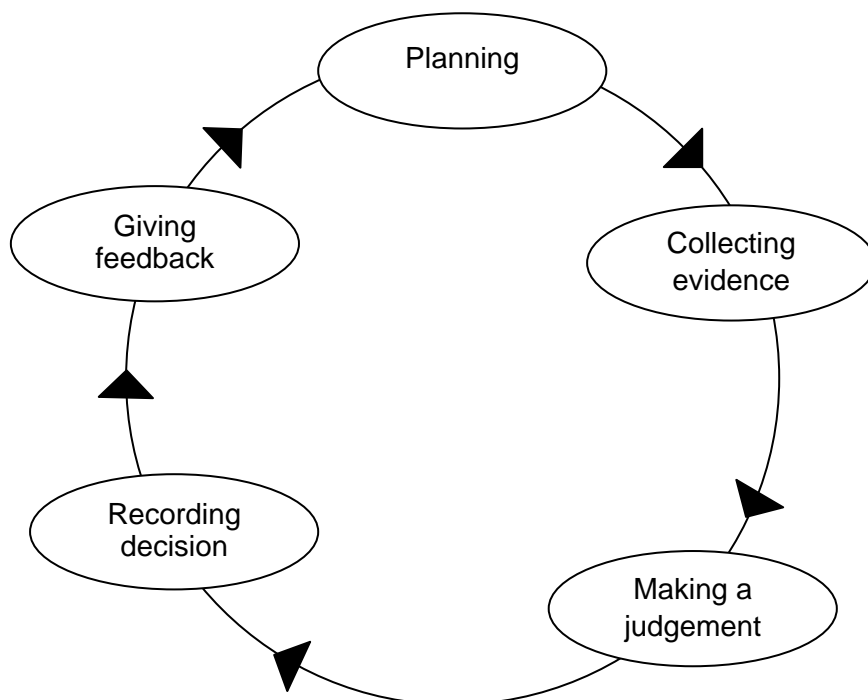
We will also advise on the procedures for allocating your Customised Award to a level on the SCQF, if this is required.

Assessment

The assessment process

The primary purpose of assessment is to determine whether a candidate is competent. There are five key stages to carrying out assessments:

- ◆ planning assessment
- ◆ collecting evidence of a candidate's competence
- ◆ making a judgement on the competence of the candidate
- ◆ recording the assessment decision
- ◆ giving feedback to the candidate



Some of these stages will occur simultaneously in the natural course of events. For example, collecting, judging and recording assessment evidence can often be completed at the same time, and feedback will generally be given on an ongoing basis.

Planning assessment

Most of a candidate's evidence for a Customised Award should arise naturally from normal work activities. This means that most assessments can be planned ahead of time, including assessments where candidates are performing tasks which happen infrequently but which can be predicted.

Planning should take account of candidates' individual circumstances — for example, shift patterns and periods when it will not be possible to assess the candidate directly. This may include situations where candidates may have to work largely on their own, without regular supervision, or in remote locations. In these circumstances, it is particularly important to plan how evidence will be collected.

The assessor and the candidate should agree when the assessor needs to be present, and when the candidate can gather evidence which will be presented for assessment at a later stage — this is often done with **witness testimonies**. Assessment could also involve simulation, in some circumstances.

Joint planning between assessors and candidates helps to:

- ◆ encourage the candidate to get involved and take ownership of the assessment process
- ◆ build a rapport between candidates and assessors
- ◆ identify opportunities for collecting evidence efficiently and effectively
- ◆ ensure that the evidence collected is sufficient and valid

Assessment methods

A wide range of assessment methods can be used.

- Observation:** This assessment method is the most natural, as candidates are directly observed doing their job. Observation can be supplemented by video or audio recording of an activity which the assessor can review later.
- Products of work:** Evaluation of a work product can be used in conjunction with observation. The results of a piece of work or a work record can often provide evidence of a candidate's competence.
- Simulation:** This assessment method will normally involve observation, but the candidate will be performing in simulated work conditions, rather than during normal work. Simulations may be used for activities which might not arise in the workplace often, or which are too expensive or too dangerous to assess otherwise (dealing with an emergency, for example).

Witness testimony: A statement about the candidate's ability to perform a task can be obtained from someone who has worked closely with the candidate, eg a line manager or supervisor. This may be useful where the assessor is not in a position to observe a candidate's performance directly. It can also be used for assessing competences which have to be demonstrated over a period of time, such as working safely and working as part of a team.

Questioning: This can be used to support performance evidence (it should not be used instead of it). Questioning can involve informal discussions and/or personal interviews and may be used to:

- ◆ assess whether candidates understand *why* they are doing something, as well as being *able* to do it
- ◆ collect information about how candidates would perform in unusual or unexpected situations
- ◆ support performance evidence where this alone is unlikely to provide enough evidence of knowledge and understanding
- ◆ assess competence in the area of personal and interpersonal skills

Other assessment methods used to support performance evidence can include:

- ◆ case studies and projects which can be used to assess knowledge and specific work skills, eg the ability to prepare a project proposal or a maintenance schedule
- ◆ personal statements and log books which can record a candidate's performance, progress and experiences
- ◆ existing employee records such as assessment records from other vocational qualifications, appraisal reports and training records, which may contribute to evidence of a candidate's competence

Another important fact to bear in mind when planning assessments is that there is no need for each part of each Unit to be assessed separately. As far as possible, assessment should reflect a candidate's normal working practices, and this will probably mean that there will be opportunities to assess several Outcomes at once.

Making a judgement

The next stage in assessment is for the candidate's evidence to be judged against the standards. This stage can be done at the same time as the evidence is being collected, eg during an observation.

The evidence has to be judged against the Performance Criteria, Range and Evidence Requirements. Candidates should demonstrate that they can perform the specified activities and that they have the knowledge and understanding this requires.

The assessor then makes one of the following two judgements:

- ◆ the candidate is competent
- ◆ the candidate is not yet competent — this may include situations where there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement

If the assessor makes the second of these judgements, the next stage may involve further assessments, reviewing the assessment plan, or identifying a training or development need. This would normally be dealt with when giving feedback to the candidate.

Recording evidence of competence

A straightforward system for recording assessment evidence and judgements should be used and adopted by all the assessors in your company (if there's more than one). The recording method used should meet the needs of candidates, your company and the awarding body.

An individual assessment record should show what evidence has been produced, what decisions have been made, and where the evidence is located. It is not necessary to collect all the evidence in one place — as long as it is clearly referenced in the assessment record. Evidence should be accessible so that assessment decisions can be monitored by the internal verifier.

The assessment record could be signed by the assessor whenever the candidate achieves an Outcome.

Giving feedback

All candidates should be given feedback by the assessor on any evidence presented, and on the result of each assessment. This can often be done informally, immediately after each assessment. The candidate and assessor may also organise regular meetings to review the assessment plan and target dates, and to identify assessment opportunities.

If the candidate has not met the required standard in an assessment, the assessor should make this clear and arrange for further training and experience if necessary.

Candidates who disagree with a decision made by an assessor have the right to appeal against that decision. The grounds on which an appeal can be made, and the procedure for making an appeal, should be clearly explained to the candidate at the induction stage.

Internal verification and quality assurance

To be effective, a Customised Award has to satisfy all interested parties that valid, reliable measures are in place to ensure that employees are competent to carry out their duties in a safe and effective manner.

Internal verification

Internal verification is a key part of maintaining the quality of the Customised Award — its primary function is to ensure that assessments are consistent. The key stages are outlined below.

Standardisation — as part of preparation for assessment, internal verifier(s) should meet with assessors to agree on the assessment and recording methods to be used. Assessors should be able to come to a common interpretation of standards, and techniques such as meeting to discuss sources of evidence, and developing common questions and exemplars should help.

Monitoring — the judgements made and assessment records kept by assessors should be monitored by the internal verifier(s) to ensure that the standards are being interpreted consistently. Sampling (a quality assurance technique — see the SQA publication *Guide to Internal Moderation for SQA Centres*) should be used to confirm that assessment judgements made by *all* assessors are reviewed. If more than one internal verifier is involved, all the verifiers should meet regularly to discuss the monitoring system (and to ensure consistency of the internal verification process). Records of internal verifiers' meetings with each other and with assessors would form part of the quality assurance system for the Customised Award.

Review — an additional quality assurance step will involve ongoing monitoring and review of assessment and internal verification. This should be undertaken by internal verifiers, in conjunction with the co-ordinator, and should address issues such as:

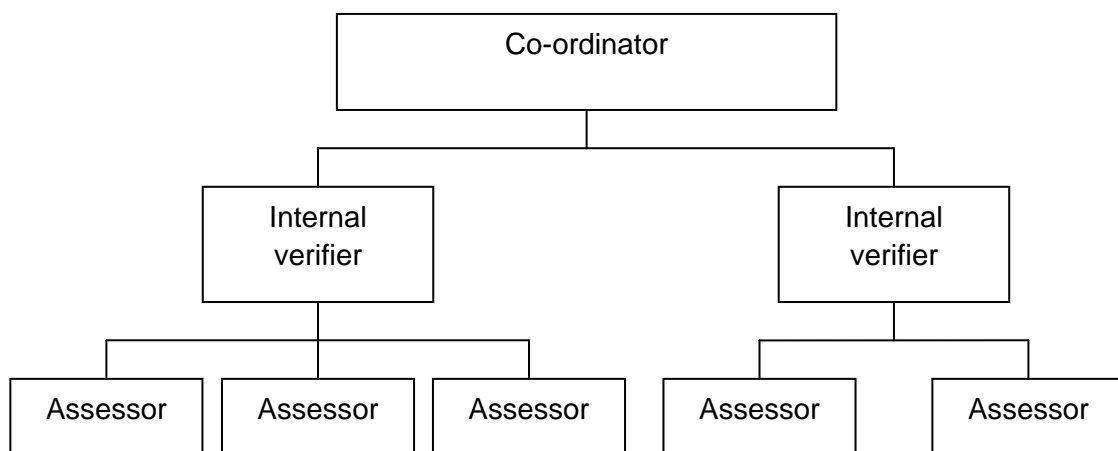
- ◆ feedback from assessors' and internal verifiers' meetings
- ◆ feedback from external parties
- ◆ the effectiveness of the assessment and internal verification processes

Quality assurance

The way a company assures the quality of their implementation of a Customised Award can be influenced by a number of factors, for example:

- ◆ the number of assessors and internal verifiers required
- ◆ the work patterns and locations of individuals, assessors and internal verifiers
- ◆ experience of operating the quality systems associated with vocational qualifications

This diagram shows a typical organisation structure supporting a Customised Award.



Roles in quality assurance

The role of the assessor is to:

- ◆ ensure that the candidate is ready for assessment, identify opportunities to carry out assessments, agree an assessment plan, and set target dates with the candidate
- ◆ work with the candidate to collect evidence of competence
- ◆ assess evidence and make judgements about the candidate's competence
- ◆ record judgements, keep assessment records, and provide feedback to the candidate
- ◆ liaise with the internal verifier

The role of the internal verifier is to:

- ◆ help assessors to prepare for, and standardise, assessments
- ◆ observe and countersign a sample of assessments and records to monitor consistency
- ◆ support the assessors by offering guidance and advice

The role of the co-ordinator is to:

- ◆ co-ordinate and maintain the quality of all the assessment, internal verification, and implementation arrangements for the Customised Award
- ◆ ensure that all candidates, assessors and internal verifiers have been briefed and trained
- ◆ ensure that the appropriate records are maintained
- ◆ liaise with SQA

In some companies, the role of the co-ordinator may be carried out by an internal verifier.

Introducing a Customised Award

In addition to developing standards of competence, and assessment and internal verification processes, preparing to introduce a Customised Award will typically involve:

- ◆ identifying and training assessors and internal verifiers
- ◆ assessing candidates' current competence levels, and preparing them for assessment
- ◆ identifying the resources you will need

Assessors and internal verifiers

You should identify the assessors and internal verifiers for the Customised Award as soon as possible to ensure that they are fully involved in the planning stages. Assessors will normally be supervisors or team leaders. Internal verifiers can be selected for specific work areas, or can be located centrally, for example, via the training department.

Assessors need both to be technically expert in the area they will be assessing, and competent as workplace assessors. Most of them will need training in assessment methods.

The National Occupational Standards (NOS) in Learning and Development on which nationally recognised assessor qualifications are developed, are available from the SQA subject webpage.

Centres may choose to enrol their staff for these nationally recognised qualifications or propose other suitable qualifications if they have been mapped to the relevant NOS. The same principle applies to the internal verifier role.

Awarded by SQA, the following nationally recognised qualifications are suited to those assessing in the workplace:

- ◆ L&D9D: Assess Workplace Competence Using Direct Methods (SCQF)
- ◆ L&D9DI: Assess Workplace Competence Using Direct and Indirect Methods (SCQF)
- ◆ Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment (QCF)

The following qualifications are most suited to those assessing in an environment other than the workplace:

- ◆ Carry Out the Assessment Process (SQA HN Unit)
- ◆ Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement (QCF)

Internal verifiers also need to have technical expertise in the areas being assessed so they can support the assessors and ensure that standards are being maintained. Like assessors, most internal verifiers will need training in methods of internal verification and quality assurance to help them carry out their role.

Internal verifiers must be working towards a qualification in internal verification. The following nationally recognised qualifications are suited to those internally verifying in the workplace:

- ◆ L&D11: Internally Monitor and Maintain the Quality of Workplace Assessment (SCQF Unit)
- ◆ Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assessment Processes and Practice (QCF Unit)

The following qualifications are most suited to those internally verifying in an environment other than the workplace:

- ◆ Internally Verify the Assessment Process (SQA HN Unit)

It is important that both assessors and internal verifiers have a clear understanding of their roles in the programme. A good starting point may be briefing sessions — there's an example on the next page.

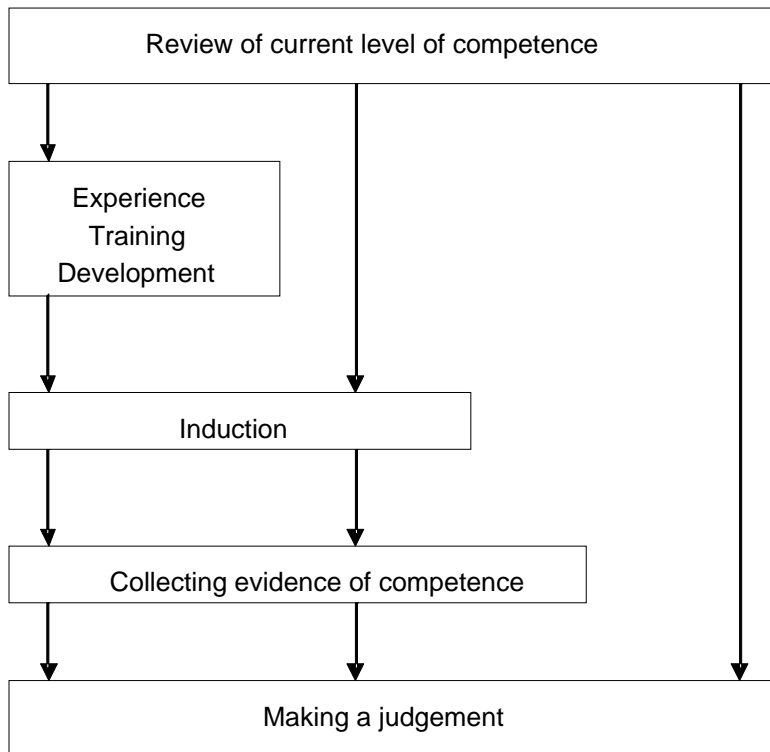
Customised Award — briefing session

- ◆ What is a Customised Award and how does it fit with the company's objectives and business processes?
- ◆ What is competence?
- ◆ What do Units of competence look like?
- ◆ Who is involved — role of candidates, assessors, internal verifiers, co-ordinator, management?
- ◆ What is next — overview of the assessment process.
- ◆ How can Customised Awards link with national initiatives, such as Scottish Vocational Qualifications, the SCQF, and Investors in People?
- ◆ What is the role of SQA?

Preparing candidates for assessment

At the start of a Customised Award there are three main types of candidate:

- ◆ employees who may need more experience, training or development before being assessed
- ◆ experienced employees who may be judged as having all the relevant skills and would therefore be able to be assessed immediately
- ◆ employees who may be able to demonstrate their competence using existing evidence



An initial step will be to review candidates' current skills and competences, and match these to the standards. This could be done by comparing activities (Outcomes and Performance Criteria) in the standards with the tasks that individuals do in their daily work (perhaps from a detailed job description). This would normally be done by line managers, supervisors and/or assessors with the candidates themselves. An important feature of this preparation stage is that candidates should be able to make informed decisions about their own training and assessment needs.

For candidates needing additional training and/or experience, an individual training and development plan can be drawn up. This may include traineeships, coaching and specific training programmes.

Another key step which should be taken before carrying out any assessments is an induction for the candidates. This is a critical activity and is the joint responsibility of the assessor and the company. The most important outcomes of the induction should be that:

- ◆ candidates and assessors understand each other's roles and responsibilities in the assessment process
- ◆ candidates are familiar with the standards on which the assessment is based
- ◆ candidates understand the assessment documentation
- ◆ candidates are aware of the judgements which can be made by the assessor — ie 'competent' or 'not yet competent'
- ◆ candidates know what support systems are available, and are aware of the appeals procedure

For experienced candidates, assessment can start straight after the induction process.

As we have already said, candidates may be able to use existing records as evidence of their competence — the assessor would be required to make a judgement on the basis of this evidence. This is sometimes referred to as Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL).

Resources

Developing and implementing a Customised Award involves both direct costs (in the form of SQA fees) and indirect costs. The latter will vary widely from company to company, depending on the resources already available for training, development and assessment. The main resources for implementing a Customised Award, as with any new initiative, are time and money. Key issues to be considered include:

- ◆ the scope of the Customised Award programme and the systems already in place
- ◆ the number of candidates, assessors and internal verifiers
- ◆ training for assessors and internal verifiers
- ◆ the development of assessment, internal verification and quality assurance systems
- ◆ the work time taken by candidates during induction, training and development, and assessment
- ◆ the work time taken by assessors, internal verifiers and the co-ordinator
- ◆ the need to develop administrative and operational systems to support the Customised Award

Companies may wish to consider outsourcing and external partnerships to help with some aspects of the Customised Award. Examples include:

- ◆ using a training-provider or college to train assessors and internal verifiers
- ◆ buying in the expertise of another organisation to assist with the internal verification process
- ◆ working in conjunction with an existing SQA centre

SQA's role

Customised Awards are awarded by SQA. SQA is responsible for ensuring that all companies offering its qualifications comply with certain standards, and it does this by running a quality assurance system. This has three parts:

- ◆ **Validation** — checking that a qualification meets the needs of users and SQA's quality criteria
- ◆ **Approval** — checking that a company has in place the assessment, internal verification and quality assurance systems it needs to deliver a Customised Award
- ◆ **External verification** is the process of checking that a company's assessment of candidates has been consistent and has complied with the required standards for the award

Validation

Before your company can offer a Customised Award, we will have to validate any new Units in the award and the structure of the award. There are no set requirements for the structure and content of Customised Awards, but we will consult with experts on the technical content of the Units, and on the coherence and appropriateness of the award structure.

Approval

An approved centre is a company which is authorised by SQA to carry out assessments to the standards required by a Customised Award. To be approved, your company must be able to meet SQA's requirements for:

- ◆ quality assurance mechanisms which will support the Customised Award
- ◆ appropriate assessment and internal verification systems
- ◆ trained assessors and internal verifiers, and a member of staff designated as co-ordinator
- ◆ a support system for candidates
- ◆ record-keeping systems for candidates, and a system of communication with SQA
- ◆ a health and safety policy and an equal opportunities policy

If your company has established quality systems, it may already meet most of these requirements, and the approval process will only involve us reviewing your existing systems.

External verification

Once your company has been approved as an SQA centre, it will be responsible for ensuring that the assessment of candidates for the Customised Award is consistent and meets the standards. SQA's role will be to confirm that standards are being maintained and to provide an independent, external quality assurance audit.

We have a team of External Verifiers who visit centres to review assessment and internal verification arrangements. How often these Verifiers visit you will depend on the requirements of your company and the award.

Certification

Customised Award candidates will gain recognition for each Unit they achieve in the form of a Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC). The SQC is a personal record which is automatically updated each time the holder achieves a Unit — so it forms a complete record of someone's achievements over his or her career.

In addition to the SQC, once an employee has achieved all the Units making up the award, he or she will receive a Customised Awards Certificate. This bears the SQA crest together with the name or logo of the company and the title of the Customised Award.

Customised Award fees

The direct costs for implementing a Customised Award include:

- ◆ a one-off initial set up fee which covers the cost of developing and implementing your Customised Award
- ◆ a one-off centre and award approval fee
- ◆ a verification fee for each visit from an External Verifier
- ◆ certification fees for each candidate

Customised services

The development and implementation of Customised Awards is managed by SQA's Customised Awards Section. SQA's Business Development Team provide a personalised support service for companies wishing to introduce Customised Awards.

Needs analysis — reviewing existing staff development, training and assessment systems, and identifying objectives for the development of the workforce.

Skills profiling — identifying the skills required to meet a company's business objectives.

Standards and qualifications development — this may involve:

- ◆ matching skills profiles to existing national standards and Units of competence
- ◆ developing new standards and Units of competence
- ◆ matching training to standards of competence
- ◆ reviewing and validating existing company standards

Implementation systems — we can provide advice and development assistance for:

- ◆ assessment and recording systems
- ◆ internal quality assurance systems
- ◆ operational and administrative systems
- ◆ partnership arrangements
- ◆ professional development workshops for: managing an SVQ Programme (where this is relevant to Customised Awards); assessment; and Portfolio Building in an SVQ Programme (where this is relevant to Customised Awards)

Aftercare — the Customised Awards Section will provide an account management service throughout the implementation of the Customised Award.

The customised services outlined here are charged on a daily rate.

Further information

The publications referred to in this guide are available for download from SQA's website. These documents can be produced, on request, in alternative formats, including large type, Braille and numerous community languages. For further details, or to order printed copies, telephone SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 0845 279 1000.

Appendix: Glossary of terms used in vocational education and training

A/V Units	Common term used to refer to national standards developed by the National Training Organisation for Employment for assessors and internal verifiers.
Approval	The process by which SQA ensures that a company has the required assessment, internal verification and quality assurance arrangements to deliver a Customised Award.
Assessment	The process of generating and collecting evidence of a candidate's performance and judging it against defined standards.
Assessor	The person with responsibility for making assessment judgements in accordance with defined standards.
Awarding body	A body with the authority to award (certificate) vocational qualifications (such as a Customised Award) and approve companies which can offer them.
Candidate	The individual employee enrolling for a Customised Award.
Case studies and projects	A method of assessment which may be used to assess a combination of knowledge and skills, such as the ability to undertake specific work tasks.
Centre	A company which has been approved by SQA to deliver and assess a Customised Award.
Competence	The ability to perform activities within an occupational role to the standards expected in employment.
Co-ordinator	The person with responsibility for the efficient maintenance and running of a Customised Award.
Customised Award	A vocational qualification which is designed to reflect specific skill requirements of individual companies. Awards may include company specific and existing National Units.
Element	See Outcome .

Employee records	Records which may be used to provide evidence of a candidate's competence. Records may include assessment records from vocational qualifications, appraisals and training.
Evidence Requirements	Specifies the type and amount of evidence required to demonstrate that a candidate has met the standards specified in each of the Performance Criteria for all of the contexts specified in the Range. This will include performance evidence and knowledge evidence.
External verification	The process used by SQA to ensure that standards are being maintained by an approved centre.
External Verifier	The person appointed by SQA to visit centres to ensure that standards for assessment and quality assurance for a Customised Award are being maintained.
Integrated assessment	An assessment which can provide evidence of competence for several Outcomes and/or Performance Criteria at the same time.
Internal verification	The process used by a company to ensure that assessment judgements are applied correctly and consistently within a company.
Internal verifier	The person with responsibility for ensuring that assessors apply standards uniformly and consistently within a company.
Knowledge	Knowledge required to underpin the tasks/activities identified in the Unit.
Observation	A means of assessment in which a candidate is directly observed carrying out tasks required by his/her occupational role.
Outcome	Describes the tasks/activities which a candidate has to perform in his/her area of work.
Performance Criteria	Specify the level of competence (standards) to which the tasks/activities described in the Outcome have to be performed.
Personal statements and log books	A method of assessment which may be used to record a candidate's performance, progress and experiences.

Products of work	A method of assessment in which something a candidate makes or does provides evidence of competence.
Questioning	A method of assessment which could be used to support performance evidence and collect additional evidence of competence.
Range	Specifies the circumstances and applications in which the tasks/activities described in the Outcome have to be performed and for which evidence must be gathered.
Scope	See Range .
SCQF	The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) provides a national framework for qualifications in Scotland. The Framework helps people to compare qualifications in terms of their level of difficulty and their size, and makes the relationship between qualifications clearer.
Simulation	An assessment method in which a candidate is observed performing in simulated work conditions rather than during normal work activities. Simulations may be used where direct observation is not possible for practical or safety reasons.
SQA	The Scottish Qualifications Authority. National accrediting body for Scotland and awarding body for all types of qualifications except degrees.
Standardisation	A process of ensuring that all assessments covering the same task/activity are of the same standard.
Standards of competence	Define the tasks and their associated assessment criteria for the skills required within an occupational role.
SVQs	Scottish Vocational Qualifications. SVQs are National Qualifications which reflect occupational roles within a specific sector.
Unit of competence	A grouping of standards of competence which describe key areas of work. Units include company specific Units and SVQ Units.
Validation	The process of ensuring that a Customised Award will meet the needs of users and SQA criteria.

Vocational qualifications

A grouping of Units which will lead to certification as a qualification. Vocational qualifications include SVQs, HNCs/HNDs and Customised Awards.

Witness

This person may have worked closely with a candidate being assessed and may be able to provide confirmation of (evidence of) his/her ability to perform a task/activity. A witness may be a line manager or supervisor.

Witness testimony

A statement obtained from a witness which describes an event or activity in which the witness has seen a candidate's work and indicates why the witness believes that this demonstrates competence.

