Frequently asked questions on SCQF and RQF assessor/verifier provision

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SQA Group Award/Unit terms used in this FAQs document

SCQF Workplace Assessor and Verifier Units/PDAs refer to:

♦ Unit: *Assess Workplace Competence Using Direct Methods* (L&D9D). SQA Unit code: FD40 04
♦ PDA: *Workplace Assessment Using Direct Methods* (L&D9D). SQA code: GA28 47

♦ Unit: *Assess Workplace Competence Using Direct and Indirect Methods* (L&D9DI). SQA Unit code: FD41 04
♦ PDA: *Workplace Assessment Using Direct and Indirect Methods* (L&D9DI). SQA code: GA2E 48

♦ Unit: *Internally Monitor and Maintain the Quality of Workplace Assessment* (L&D11). SQA Unit code: FD43 04
♦ PDA: *Internal Verification of Workplace Assessment* (L&D11). SQA code: GA2F 48

RQF Group Awards/Units refer to:

Group Award: *Assessing Competence in the Work Environment*. SQA Code: GA2M 69.

The above Group Award comprises:

♦ Unit: *Understanding the Principles and Practices of Assessment*. SQA Unit code: FD49 70
♦ Unit: *Assess Occupational Competence in the Work Environment*. SQA Unit code: FD47 70

Group Award: RQF Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement. SQA Code: GA2N 69

The above Group Award comprises:

♦ Unit: *Understanding the Principles and Practices of Assessment.* SQA Unit code: FD49 70
♦ Unit: *Assess Vocational Skills, Knowledge and Understanding.* SQA Unit code: FD48 70

Group Award: RQF Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement. SQA code: GA2X 70

The above Group Award comprises:

♦ Unit: *Understanding the Principles and Practices of Assessment*. SQA Unit code: FD49 70
♦ Unit: *Assess Occupational Competence in the Work Environment*. SQA Unit code: FD47 70
♦ *Unit: Assess Vocational Skills, Knowledge and Understanding*. SQA Unit code: FD48 70

Group Award: *The Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice*. SQA code: GA2P 78

The above Group Award comprises:

♦ Unit: *Understanding the Principles and Practices of Internally Assuring the Quality of Assessment*. SQA Unit code: FD4A 63
♦ Unit: *Internally Assure the Quality of Assessment*. SQA Unit code: FD4C 63

Group Award: RQF Level 4 Certificate in Leading the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice. SQA code: GA2L 63

The above Group Award comprises:

♦ Unit: *Understanding the Principles and Practices of Internally Assuring the Quality of Assessment*. SQA Unit code: FD4A 63
♦ Unit: *Internally Assure the Quality of Assessment*. SQA Unit code: FD4C 63
♦ Unit: *Plan, allocate and monitor work in own area of responsibility.* SQA Unit code: FD4D 63

General

1 Why are there two sets of assessor/verifier qualifications, one for the RQF and one for the SCQF?

Each framework requires qualifications to be designed in a way that meets the specific requirements of that framework. The qualifications consulted upon and proposed to meet SCQF requirements did not meet the requirements of the RQF and vice versa.

2 If I achieve RQF assessor/verifier qualifications, would they be recognised if I then went on to assess SVQs?

Yes, SQA Accreditation provided clarification in a May 2011 Update:'For the purposes of quality assurance in centres, we will also accept Assessor/Verifier qualifications which have been accredited by Ofqual (which include the RQF assessor/verifier qualifications) where the qualifications are based on the Learning and Development National Occupational Standards'.

The Accrediation Body also provided additional information in relation to assessor and verifier competence in their October 2013 Update. Link: http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/42183.2699.html.

Centres are also advised to refer to each relevant SVQ Assessment Strategy for information on acceptable assessor/verifier qualifications.

3 If I have the A and V Units (or even D Units), will these qualifications still allow me to continue to assess/verify S/NVQs and RQF Units?

Yes, as you are already considered qualified. However, you do need to show that you continue to practise to the assessment and verification standards contained in the Learning and Development National Occupational Standards (Standards 9 and 11). . SQA has a CPD Toolkit on its L&D webpage that can assist with this process.

The use of the CPD Toolkit shouldn't be confused with recognising CPD associated with actually achieving the L&D9/11 Units or RQF equivalent Units which some A/V Unit qualified assessors/verifiers seek. This process involves enrolment onto the appropriate assessor/verifier Unit and then assessment. The assessment process should of course take into account the assessor/verifier-candidate's prior achievement.

Refer to question 18 for further information on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)[1].

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[1] Changed from "Refer to question 18 for further information on Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)"

4   Is there a requirement to independently assess the SCQF and RQF assessor/verifier qualifications?

No, there is no requirement to independently assess either the SCQF or RQF assessor/verifier qualifications.

5   Where can I find all the SQA guidance specifically for the SCQF and RQF assessor/verifier qualifications?

General information and standards can be accessed via SQA's website: **www.sqa.org.uk/learninganddevelopment.**

Specific evidence requirements relating to SCQF and RQF assessor/verifier qualifications can be accessed from SQA's secure website.

7   At times I am not sure if the qualification a potential Assessor-Candidate wishes to assess, is suitable for the achievement of L&D9DI or the RQF equivalent?

In the first instance we would advise you to access SQA's guidance on 'Choosing the most appropriate assessor/verifier qualifications': www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/48368.html. If you are still undecided, we would advise you to contact SQA.
Specific attention should be paid to assessor/verifiers seeking to achieve the regulated assessor/verifier qualifications - L&D9/9DI and L&D11. They have particular Assessment Strategy requirements that must be met. The key requirements for assessor/verifier-candidates to achieve these qualifications are that the candidates they are assessing/verifying must be assessed:

- in their place of work
- against standards requiring them to display occupational competence

8   Why has the term 'assessment' been used in the evidence requirements instead of a defined number of Units?

This term has been used as the assessor/verifier qualifications will also be undertaken by those assessing/verifying in-company standards of performance that have not been unitised in the same way SVQs/RQF qualifications have.

This term has also been used to accommodate holistic assessment where assessment takes place in relation to activities/evidence spanning a number of Units rather than assessment being organised on a per Unit basis.

9   How much evidence needs to be planned for and assessed? The term 'assessment' is all we have to go on.

"Each assessment should cover at least one full assessment cycle to include planning, judging evidence, providing feedback and recording the decision. As an approximation, each assessment should loosely be equivalent to 4 SCQF/RQF Credit Points".

10 Does it have to be the assessor who carries out the observation of the assessor-candidate for L&D9D/9DI and the equivalent RQF Unit?

Yes, this is featured in the Evidence Requirements. However, more than one assessor may be used to assess an assessor-candidate and the use of appropriate technology is permissible.[2]

11 Is it best to qualify as an assessor before you qualify as an internal verifier?

SQA would recommend this as good practice but it is not a mandatory requirement unless it is stipulated in an Assessment Strategy.

12 If a qualified member of staff has the A and V Units, and lectures for example in Engineering, can he assess candidates from Hairdressing who are working towards their Assessor and Verifier Units?

This would be acceptable if the member of staff also met all of the L&D Assessment Strategy requirements, ie he maintains best practice in assessment and maintains appropriate CPD.

Assessors of the Assessor and Verifier Unitsdo not have to be qualified in the subject area being assessed by the assessor-candidate as they are assessing standards in assessment which are generic.

13 What kind of technology can I use when assessing assessor/verifier-candidates?

Any of the following methods of evidence gathering would be acceptable (not an exhaustive list).
•   The use of e.g. Skype or a video camera could be used to in lieu of an on site assessor observation (an assessor observation report would still be required).
•   The use of video or audio equipment to facilitate discussions or record knowledge evidence and/or testimonial evidence.

Electronic evidence must be referenced to the appropriate parts of the Unit Specification as expected with hard-copy evidence. This can be achieved by using the counter facility of the technological equipment being used.

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[2] Deleted "where a physical assessor presence is impractical"

SCQF specific

1 Is there still a requirement for the external verifier to sample the work of the internal-verifier-candidate for L&D11 as there was with V1?

There are now a number of options to choose from to suit the internal-verifier-candidate's situation. The endorsing statement must come from a Quality Assurance practitioner which could for example be an internal verifier, external verifier or centre co-ordinator. The practitioner should be verifier qualified.

2 Have the current SCQF Assessor/ Verifier Units replaced the A and V Units that appear in Group Awards, e.g. Learning and Development SVQs and Professional Development Awards?

Yes, the following single Unit Assessor/Verifier PDA's are currently available: Assessing in the Workplace using Direct Methods; Assessing in the Workplace using Direct and Indirect Methods; Internal Verification in the Workplace; External Verification in the Workplace.

L&D9DI is also included as an optional Unit in both Level 3 and 4 SVQs in Learning and Development. L&D11 is also included as an optional Unit in the Level 4 SVQ in Learning and Development.

The L&D9DI Unit also appears in the level 3 SVQ in Healthcare Support (Clinical) and Healthcare Support (non-Clinical).

3 I work with colleagues who assess SVQs in their candidates' workplace as well as students for HN Units in a college. Which assessor qualification should they undertake?

In this situation, if assessing SVQs, your colleagues are best to first of all satisfy regulatory requirements by undertaking one of the listed qualifications (refer to the 2013 Accreditation publication below). Having achieved one if these qualifications, they would not normally be required to undertake another nationally recognised assessor qualification in order to assess HN Units. This does, however, come down to each centre's policy in relation to assessing HNs.

SVQs are regulated by SQA Accreditation who stipulate, in the document "**Assessor and Verifier Competence September 2013,"** the qualifications that assessors and verifiers must hold in order to meet regulatory requirements.

These qualifications are further defined and listed in the SQA guidance document "Choosing Appropriate Assessor and/or Verifier Qualifications."
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4   If you have an expert witness role, do you have to enrol for L&D9D?

This will normally be an option only. It is possible that some sectors may stipulate the achievement of this Unit as a requirement in their Assessment Strategies.

5   Is TQFE still an acceptable qualification for assessors of SVQs?

TQFE pus CPD remains a qualification option for assessors of SVQs unless specific Assessment Strategies such as the Learning and Development Assessment Strategy stipulate otherwise.

6   Is there an opportunity for 'accreditation of prior achievement or learning' against the L&D9 or L&D11 Units?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)[3] is an assessment method that centres can use in order to recognise candidates' previous achievements. In order to determine whether or not candidates can meet all of the requirements of the standards under assessment, it is usual that RPL[4] is used in conjunction with other corroborating methods of assessment such as observation and/or witness testimony.

Assessors of the L&D Units (L&D9DI or L&D9D or L&D11) can use RPL to recognise the skills and knowledge of those who have previously gained the D, A1, A2 or V1Units (D/A/V Units). In doing so, the assessor of the L&D Units would need to establish the currency of the D/A/V Unit holder's knowledge and skills. Centres using this method must reference RPL evidence, along with all other evidence, to all of the Performance, Knowledge and Evidence Requirements of the relevant L&D Unit being claimed. The Evidence Trackers on SQA's Secure Site (under SVQs in Learning and Development) can assist with this process. [5]

Specific guidance relating to the use of the D/A/V Units in the RPL process can be found on SQA's Secure Site.[6]

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[3] Changed from "Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA)"

[4] Changed from "APA"

[5] Inserted new L&D awards; changed "APA" to "RPL" in this paragraph

[6] Removed "Following the same principles, APA could also be used for the internal verifier qualification — L&D11.Due to their expiry date, D32/33/34 Unit evidence would not be appropriate for APA to L&D 9/11Units."

7   As part of the introduction to L&D9DI it says the assessor-candidates will be observed carrying out assessments. Does this mean observing the whole assessment process?

The evidence requirements give further clarification — as a minimum, review and feedback, as part of the assessment process, should be observed. The assessor may, if they feel it necessary, observe other parts of the assessment process.

8   What examples can you give to cover the authentication required by the IV in relation to L&D9DI.4?

This confirmation could be covered in monitoring reports or included in other quality assurance documentation completed by the internal verifier. The evidence could also be in the form of an internal verifier or internal quality assurer statement that makes a reference link to the records of assessment and progress maintained.

9   Why is there a need to have both categories of work product in L&D9DI?

The consultation carried out in Scotland prior to the accreditation of the SCQF Assessor and Verifier Units confirmed the need to include both categories. In line with the Unit title relating to direct and indirect methods, there was a consensus that assessors, at times, observed end products being produced as part of the assessment process whilst at other times were not present, thus requiring the assessor to take steps to authenticate the end products.

10 Can more than one assessor (ie two) be allocated to an assessor-candidate when he/she is being assessed for L&D9D or L&D9DI?

This is permissible as long as both assessors meet the Learning and Development Assessment Strategy requirements.

11 The A and V Units had a different emphasis regarding the assessment of knowledge. Can I still cross-refer knowledge to performance evidence for L&D9D/L&D9Dand L&D11?

The Evidence Requirements in the assessor/verifier Unit are very specific – they require knowledge to be assessed through discussion, candidate statements or questioning. There are however opportunities for the knowledge contained in candidate statements and reports (asked for under performance evidence) to be cross-referenced to knowledge.

12 For L&D9D/L&D9Dand L&D11, is it a requirement to reference evidence to the Evidence Requirements as well as the Performance Criteria (what you must do) and Knowledge (what you must know)?

The Evidence Requirements are an integral part of the Unit Specification and just like Performance Criteria and Knowledge, it should be clear from the referencing system being used that they are clearly covered. Referencing to all three parts of

the Unit Specification (Performance Criteria, Knowledge and Evidence Requirements) is essential in proving that national standards are being met.

Referencing should always be done in relation to the original wording in the Unit Specification.

13 The SCQF Learning and Development Assessment Strategy requires assessors and verifiers of the Assessors and Verifier Units (and SVQs in Learning and Development) to document CPD in line with the L&D10 Unit. How much detail needs to be recorded?

The main priority is that all the stages of the LD10 Unit standard are covered. Those stages include the identification, prioritisation, planning and recording of CPD.

SQA has developed templates and guidance which can be accessed via the Secure Site to assist centres in meeting this requirement. The template is for guidance purposes only - as long as all stages of the L&D10 Unit can be seen during external verification visits, it does not matter what types of systems and recording mechanisms centres use in order to provide the necessary evidence.

14 If the internal-verifier-candidate for L&D11 is monitoring in relation to at least three assessment decisions, does this mean that assessment decisions do not have to be looked at for one of the candidates?

The summary answer is yes, but more to satisfy a monitoring rationale rather than for any other reason. To explain, the verifier-candidate will usually be monitoring assessors who work with candidates at different levels of progress. The evidence requirements allow for the fact that not all of those candidates will necessarily have reached the assessment stage. In this case, monitoring would still take place, and would obviously not include assessment decisions, but focus more on the initial stages of assessment preparation and perhaps planning.

15 In L&D11, where it states at least three assessment decisions for at least one qualification, does this mean that the internal-verifier-candidate could potentially provide evidence of verifying a different qualification for each of the four candidates?

This would be permissible. However, in terms of SVQs (and for the desired validity of judgement in relation to other work-based qualifications/standards) internal verifiers, as well as assessors, must have an appropriate degree of occupational experience (as set out in the Assessment Strategies for SVQs) to help them make appropriate quality assurance decisions.

16 How can the internal-verifier-candidate achieve the last element of L&D11 if they do not receive EV visits from SQA?

The evidence requirements state that reports could, as an alternative, be provided by the qualified internal verifier or centre co-ordinator (these terms would also cover other appropriate internal quality assurance staff) in the internal-verifier-candidate's organisation. The reports should confirm that the

internal verifier-candidate's work conforms to external quality assurance requirements.

Where the internal assessment that the internal-verifier-candidate is quality assuring is in relation to in-company standards or qualifications that are not awarded by an awarding body such as SQA, the external quality assurance requirements could pertain to systems such as IS0 or a specifically contracted external quality assurance service. The external quality assurance system identified must cover (at least as part of its function) the quality assurance of internal assessment and internal quality assurance decisions and practice.

For more guidance, centres are advised to refer to *Achieving the Assessor and Verifier Units through assessing/verifying workplace standards/qualifications not subject to awarding body quality assurance: a checklist for SQA approved centres* which can be found on SQA's secure site.

17 In element 3, L&D11, where it says 'Observation of verifier-candidate', who can carry out this observation?

The observation can be conducted by the L&D11 Assessor. The observation could also be provided in the form of a witness testimony by another qualified internal verifier/person responsible for internal quality assurance or an external verifier.

18 If the total number of candidates being assessed by the assessors being monitored by the verifier-candidate is less than the number required, ie a total of four, does this mean that the verifier-candidate cannot achieve L&D11?

SQA will continue to consider requests for special assessment arrangements which are dealt with on an individual case basis. In making a case for a special assessment arrangement, centres would be required to prove that they had exhausted all options in trying to fulfill the stated evidence requirements. This same principle applies to the L&D9 Units. Centres that have these types of request should in the first instance contact **qav@sqa.org.uk**.

19 If an assessor-candidate for L&D9D/9DI wishes to achieve his/her qualification by assessing non-SVQ evidence, what checks should I make?

SQA has produced a checklist entitled *Achieving the Assessor and Verifier Units through assessing/verifying workplace standards/qualifications not subject to awarding body quality assurance: a checklist for SQA approved centres* which can be found on SQA's L&D http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/6861.html
The checklist has been designed to help centres decide if an organisation's qualifications/standards (being assessed or verified by potential assessor/verifier-candidates) are appropriate for the achievement of the L&D9D/9DI or L&D11Units.
For each set of organisational standards the centre deems appropriate, external verifiers are looking for centres to have answered yes to all of the questions on the checklist and retained a copy on file.

20 I have been certificated for the HN Unit *Conduct the Assessment Process*. How does this Unit match the current NOS?

RPL guidance is available on SQA's Secure Site pertaining to the use of prior achieved HN Assessor and Verifier Units as part of the RPL process when claiming previously acquired skills and knowledge against the L&D9/9DI or L&D11 Units. [7]

21 What do 'the principles of quality assurance and risk management' mean in L&D11?

The principles of quality assurance relate to validity, authenticity, reliability, currency and sufficiency (VARCS), quality assurance risk management and sampling. Risk management relates to the consideration of risk to your centre's quality assurance. Those could for example be new assessors, large candidate numbers, new/revised Units, etc. The management of risk relates to IVs within a centre putting measures in place to manage risk in line with their centre's internal policy/procedures. Dependent on the risk, measures could include, for example, increased support/interim verification, more frequent and/or timely standardisation, etc

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[7] Changed from "This Unit is about to be updated to reflect the new NOS."