



Assessment Strategy for SVQs in Supply Chain Management and Procurement

August 2014

Introduction

This strategy supersedes and replaces the Assessment Strategy for Supply Chain Management NVQs and SVQs dated February 2014.

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

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

Application of the Strategy

This Assessment Strategy was updated by Skills for Logistics in agreement with SQA Awarding Body. The SVQs covered by this Assessment Strategy are:

- SVQ in Supply Chain Management at Levels 3, 4 and 5
- SVQ in Procurement at Level 3

The Assessment Strategy is a requirement for any SSC/SSBs and Awarding Bodies (ABs) that import the SCM national occupational standards into SVQs that are not primarily designed for SCM practitioners.

Principles for the Assessment Strategy

The Assessment Strategy is designed to provide overarching principles for the Awarding Bodies that complement the requirements of the regulatory bodies for SVQs. The Supply Chain Management (SCM) NOS Board regard Awarding Bodies as being responsible for providing quality assurance processes for the assessment of the SCM standards within SVQs. The Awarding Bodies are in the best position to provide detailed assessment guidance and evidence requirements; they will need to consider whether this is achieved individually or collectively.

Suitably qualified and experienced Assessors, Internal Verifiers, and External Verifiers must be allowed to apply their professional judgement; however, they must also ensure that they comply with the assessment guidance and evidence requirements in a consistent manner. Assessment should be effective but not overly burdensome, and assessors and verifiers should establish methods to achieve this balance.

External quality control of assessment

The SCM NOS Board believes that the quality assurance principles enshrined in national guidelines produced by the regulatory bodies, if implemented correctly, provide sufficient guidance to the Awarding Bodies in matters relating to the quality assurance and control of SVQs in the SCM sector. If the SCM NOS Board has concerns about the effectiveness of an Awarding Body it has the right to raise these objections with the relevant AB, and if necessary, with the regulatory bodies.

The standards setting body (Skills for Logistics) will meet as required with the Awarding Bodies to discuss and resolve assessment issues. These meetings will seek to improve quality and consistency, and in particular will provide opportunities to identify and address any emerging areas of risk resulting from the performance of assessment centres, and to target external verification activity if necessary. Working with the Awarding Bodies, Skills for Logistics will:

- facilitate the flow of non-confidential information between the SCM NOS Board and the Awarding Bodies relating to the delivery of the SCM qualifications
- collate information and statistics about the take up of the qualifications for each country
- identify trends and developments affecting the delivery of the qualification
- consider any changes in legislation, policies, or other external factors that could affect the legitimacy of the standards and the qualifications
- resolve issues relating to the interpretation of the SCM national occupational standards
- provide ongoing review of feedback on the content of the SCM national occupational standards, particularly to inform incremental review
- report and consider risk factors arising from the performance of assessment centres
- resolve issues relating to the definition of occupational experience of assessors, internal verifiers, and external verifiers
- act as the arbiter on the interpretation of the Assessment Strategy.

Performance in the workplace

The SCM NOS Board affirms that it is critical to the validity of the SVQs that performance is assessed in the workplace. All the units of competence in the SCM standards are designed to reflect the expected performance of practitioners in real workplace settings. The standards have been tested to ensure that performance evidence can be collected in a reasonable time and cost. Where a candidate is not in a position to provide evidence due to their current assignment or position, they will need to negotiate suitable opportunities to generate evidence, e.g. through a work placement or a simulation. This must be planned and agreed with the assessment centre and if necessary with employers at the commencement of the qualification.

Use of simulation to obtain performance evidence

Simulation should not be viewed as a main source of performance evidence in SVQs. The SCM NOS Board believes that the most reliable performance evidence is generated through naturally occurring work activities. It can be disruptive and expensive to create a realistic working environment to provide an alternative to this. While there are sophisticated business simulations available, these are more appropriate to learning rather than assessing competence.

While there are no aspects of the standards that cannot be assessed using sources other than simulation, the SCM NOS Board recognises that it is possible that there will be situations where individual candidates may find it difficult to provide performance evidence derived from their normal working activities. In these situations, simulation can be considered as an option. For example, a candidate might be working on a project to set up a supply chain across a number of countries, when one of those countries becomes politically unstable. The candidate might have invested a substantial amount of time on this one project, and it might have been the prime source of evidence covering a number of units of competence. In this situation, through no fault of their own, the project is abandoned. It is

possible then to game-play the situation which might have occurred if the project had gone more smoothly.

If simulation is required, then this must be agreed with the External Verifier, who will have to decide whether the circumstances warrant its use. Only when other sources of performance evidence cannot be accessed effectively without undue burden on the candidate, should simulation be allowed. External Verifiers should discuss these situations with the Assessor and Candidate, and be able to establish a rationale for the decision. The Awarding Body is responsible for the parameters under which the simulation should operate in order to avoid the use of invalid and unacceptable practice.

Where simulation is used to generate evidence of competence, this should not be used as the sole source of evidence for any one unit of competence. Other sources and types of evidence will need to be generated to corroborate the evidence derived from simulation.

Occupational expertise of assessors for the SVQs in Supply Chain Management and Procurement

Assessors for the SVQ in Supply Chain Management and Procurement must be occupationally competent and knowledgeable in respect of the units they are going to assess. The Awarding Body must ensure that assessors have verifiable, relevant and current industry experience and knowledge of the occupational working area at, or above, the level being assessed. This experience and knowledge must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when judging candidate's competence. Assessors' experience and knowledge could be verified by:

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

The occupational experience must be at a level suitable to the level of the qualification being assessed. To assess SVQs at Level 5, the Assessor should preferably have worked at a senior level in an organisation; however, working at managerial level is acceptable. For Level 4 qualifications, the Assessor must have operated at managerial level or above. For Levels 2 and 3, the Assessor must have operated at technical/operational level or above.

Assessors must also:

- Be familiar with the National Occupational Standards making up the SVQs which they are seeking to assess to be able to interpret and make judgements on current working practices and technologies within the area of work
- Have sufficient time to carry out the role
- Receive an appropriate induction to the SVQs that they are assessing
- Actively engage in relevant, industry specific continuing professional development activities to keep up-to-date with developments relating to supply chain management and procurement practice in which they are assessing.
- Hold or be working towards an appropriate Assessor qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation the qualification regulator. Assessors holding older assessor qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are assessing to the current standards.

Occupational expertise of internal verifiers for the SVQs in Supply Chain Management and Procurement

Internal Verifiers for the SVQs in Supply Chain Management and Procurement must:

- Have an understanding of the role being verified, based upon some occupational expertise and experience in supply chain management and procurement appropriate to the level of SVQ that they are seeking to internally verify, and to the pathway(s) being progressed
- Hold or be working towards an appropriate Internal Verifier qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation the qualification regulator. Internal Verifiers holding older qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are verifying to the current standards
- Keep up-to-date with developments in relevant supply chain management and procurement practice
- Have a thorough understanding of the national occupational standards making up the SVQs which they are seeking to internally verify, and be able to provide advice upon the interpretation of the standards.

Occupational expertise of external verifier for the SVQs in Supply Chain Management and Procurement

External Verifiers must hold or be working towards an appropriate External Verifier qualification as identified by SQA Accreditation the qualification regulator. External Verifiers holding older qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they are verifying to the current standards.

There is no requirement for external verifiers to have occupational experience of working in the supply chain and procurement sector, but it is highly desirable that they do, and at least have experience in working in related occupational areas, e.g. management. External verifiers should therefore have some occupational understanding of working in the supply chain management and procurement sector at a level appropriate to the qualifications they are externally verifying.

External Verifiers must have a thorough understanding of the national occupational standards making up the SVQs which they are seeking to externally verify.