

**Assessment Strategy**  
**Plant Operations SVQ Level 2**

# Assessment Strategy

## Plant Operations NVQ/SVQ Level 2

### Introduction

This document sets out the assessment strategy for the Plant Operations Level 2 NVQ/SVQ. The assessment strategy describes the Plant Operations Standards Development Group's expectations with regard to assessment of the national occupational standards that form the basis of the qualification.

The document has been prepared following guidance published by QCA and SQA 'Developing an assessment strategy for NVQs and SVQs' and 'Good practice in the development and assessment strategies for NVQs and SVQs'.

As with all NVQs/SVQs, Awarding Bodies are also expected to meet the requirements for quality control as set out by the regulatory bodies.

NVQs/SVQs have been in operation in the sector for the past eight years. The assessment strategy therefore reflects and builds upon existing experience and good practice in relation to assessment and quality control.

This document addresses the responsibilities of the Plant Operations Standards Development Group in respect of the four components of an assessment strategy:

- mandatory requirement for evidence from performance in the workplace
- where simulated working conditions may be deployed to assess competence and the characteristics that simulation should have
- the occupational expertise requirements for assessors and verifiers
- the recommended approach to external quality control of assessment.

### Assessment of performance in the workplace and simulation

The majority of the evidence required for these awards must be derived from performance in the workplace. The units of competence clearly indicate in bold/italic print the few instances where evidence via simulation is permitted. Any simulations that are allowed must be agreed between the Centre and the External Verifier and must be set up so as to replicate real work activities, as closely as possible to those normally operating in the workplace. Simulations must be designed to achieve the following:

- Candidates must be able to demonstrate the actions they would take, using the equipment and materials normally found within the workplace;
- Information available to candidates on the hazards and risks they may encounter and the response expected must be consistent with workplace policies and practices of a typical organisation involved with the occupation.

Where simulation is allowed and agreed between the Centre and the External Verifier, it must only be practised under the conditions of a realistic working environment, which is defined as:

- A place where the provision of the occupational work activities are carried out;
- Working conditions should reflect those found in the workplace (which may include the customers' premises) and include facilities, appliances, systems and controls used in the workplace for the activities being assessed. The simulation must also replicate the constraints and pressures of the workplace.

## **Occupational competence of assessors and verifiers**

### **Assessors**

Assessors for these NVQs/SVQs must be competent and must have an up-to-date working knowledge of the occupation and sector, they must:

- within the last five years have two years' operational experience appropriate to the level of NVQ/SVQ they intend to assess
- hold an in-depth knowledge of the National Occupational Standards for the sector
- hold or be working towards Employment National Training Organisation (ENTO) unit A1 or hold units D32 and D33. In Scotland the Scottish teaching exemption should apply and where the ENTO units apply, an action plan should be agreed for their achievement.

Standard Setting Bodies may agree with their respective Awarding Bodies a more demanding criteria. For assessors the above is agreed as a minimum level of criteria

All assessors must have a sound in-depth knowledge of the national occupational standards and requirements of the NVQ/SVQ; they must also have an understanding of the Awarding Body policies and procedures.

All assessors must only assess in their acknowledged area of occupational competence.

All assessors must be registered with their approved centre and be accountable to that organisation for their assessment practice.

All assessors must demonstrate a commitment to uphold the integrity of the national occupational standards.

All assessors must be prepared to participate in training initiatives for their continued professional development.

All assessors should not be involved in the training of candidates. However, if this places an unrealistic assessment burden on the approved centre, it is acceptable, in instances where the assessor might hold a position of giving him/her a vested interest in the outcome of the assessment, for the awarding body to implement additional quality assurance measures to ensure that the integrity and objectivity of assessment will not be compromised.

## Internal Verifiers

Internal Verifiers for the N/SVQ must have an up-to-date working knowledge of the occupation and sector, they must:

- within the last five years have two years' experience appropriate to the level of NVQ/SVQ they intend to verify
- have an in-depth knowledge of National Occupational Standards for the sector
- hold or be working toward ENTO unit V1 or hold unit D34. They will ideally hold the ENTO unit A1 or units D32 and D33.

Internal Verifiers must be in a position to contribute to and influence an Approved Centre's assessment policy. They should be EITHER:

- employed by the same organisation as the Assessors OR
- working in partnership with the Approved Centre and have access to the evidence used by the Assessors.

All internal verifiers must have a sound in-depth knowledge of the national occupational standards and NVQ/SVQ requirements for the assessments they are verifying. They must also have a good understanding of the Awarding Body policies and procedures.

All internal verifiers must demonstrate a commitment to uphold the integrity of the national occupational standards and their assessment and verification practices.

All internal verifiers must be prepared to participate in training initiatives for their continued professional development.

All internal verifiers must provide evidence of their ability to maintain occupational competence thus keeping their technical knowledge and skills up to date.

## External Verifiers

External Verifiers must have an up-to-date working knowledge of the occupation and sector – this is defined as:

- having in-depth knowledge of the National Occupational Standards for the sector
- a minimum of two years working in the sector or
- involvement in the delivery of training and skills development activities within the sector.

External Verifiers must either hold or be working towards ENTO Unit V2 or hold unit D35, the units of competence concerned with external verification, when they are appointed by the Awarding Body. External Verifiers will ideally hold ENTO unit A1 or units D32 and D33 and they are encouraged to achieve unit V1 or hold unit D34 (See note 1).

External Verifiers must be prepared to participate in training initiatives for their continued professional development.

External Verifiers must demonstrate their ability to maintain credibility with the sector and to retain the confidence of the sector through commitment to ongoing personal and professional development.

**Note 1** All External Verifiers are expected to achieve ENTO unit V2 within 12 months of being accepted as an External Verifier. They must have achieved ENTO unit A1 or hold units D32 and D33 before being appointed as an External Verifier.

**Note 2** The Scottish Teachers qualification can act as an exemption for the ENTO A/V units within SVQs. There is however no exemption for D35/V2.

Standard Setting Bodies may have within their respective Awarding Bodies a more demanding criteria. The above is agreed as a minimum level of criteria.

## External quality control of assessment

This section of the Assessment Strategy addresses the need to put in place means by which greater quality control of assessment can be achieved and can be recognised.

The purposes of introducing external quality control strategies for the NVQ/SVQ are as follows:

- raising the credibility of the awards in the eyes of the industry and the general public
- reducing the risk of pressure being placed on assessment organisations to award qualifications
- ensuring consistency of the assessment of the essential knowledge and understanding
- raising the health and safety standards within the industry.

A three-strand approach to quality control of assessment has been adopted for the Construction Craft and Operative NVQs/SVQs:

- 1 Externally set banks of questions and answers available to assess the 'essential' knowledge and understanding not demonstrated through performance alone. These should be available for each unit, delivered and marked internally and moderated externally by external verifiers. This will serve to ensure the consistency of assessments of the essential knowledge and understanding.
- 2 A risk assessment approach should be used to identify and evaluate the likely risks that assessment decisions may be unsound, so that prompt and effective actions can be taken to achieve reliable, valid and consistent assessment. A statistical monitoring system should be adopted to provide information on the performance of centres and assessors. The information should be used to inform the external verification policies and practices and to inform the development of training and development events and activities. It is also recommended that the information be used to establish an effective system of cross-centre consistency of interpretation and assessment of the National Occupational Standards through, for example, national external verifier meetings and regional assessor and internal verifier meetings.
- 3 Ideally, assessors will not be involved in the training of candidates. However, it is recognised that if this places an unrealistic burden on the approved centre, it is acceptable that instances where the assessor might hold a position of giving him/her a vested interest in the outcome of the assessments, the Standards Setting Body would require the Awarding Body to implement additional quality assurance measures to ensure that the integrity and objectivity of assessment will not be compromised. This will include EV sampling as determined by the Awarding Body.