



CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY FOR SCOTTISH VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

SEPTEMBER 2015

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CONTEXT

These qualifications have been developed by the Career Development Institute (CDI) the UK-wide professional body for the career development sector.

The aim of these qualifications is to give candidates the opportunity to:

- Develop their understanding of the career development sector
- Develop their skills and competences in career information, advice and employability support
- Achieve nationally recognised qualifications
- Continue their professional development
- Progress their careers within the career development sector

Entry requirements

All staff involved in the assessment or delivery of these qualifications should understand the requirements of the qualifications and match them to the needs and capabilities of individual learners before entering them for these qualifications.

These qualifications have been developed so they are free from any barriers that restrict access or progression and therefore promote equal opportunities.

There are no formal entry requirements for these qualifications but candidates should be carrying out the functions covered in these qualifications.

There is no requirement for any specific prior learning. It is recommended that an initial assessment should take place to ensure the candidate is capable of reaching the required standards.

ASSESSMENT CENTRE REQUIREMENTS

The occupational knowledge and expertise of those undertaking the roles of assessment and internal quality assurance is essential for ensuring valid, fair and reliable assessment. The integrity of assessments and quality assurance is of critical importance.

Centres must

- ensure there are sufficient trained or qualified personnel to assess the number of expected candidates
- ensure there are sufficient trained or qualified personnel to internally quality assure the number of candidates and assessors
- put systems and internal quality assurance personnel in place to ensure that all assessments are valid, reliable, safe and manageable and suitable to the needs of the candidate
- ensure evidence is authentic and sufficient
- ensure there is a standardisation process in place to ensure that all assessments are consistent and fair

- ensure those undertaking the roles of quality assurance and assessment maintain their skills, knowledge and understanding regarding assessment and quality assurance and the associated qualification
- ensure there is sufficient time to conduct effective assessment and internal quality assurance
- ensure that any corrective measures identified by external verifiers or awarding bodies are addressed.

These principles may be contained in, or additional to, the regulatory requirements that Awarding Bodies must meet for the delivery of Scottish Vocational Qualifications as required by the Regulatory Authority, SQA Accreditation.

This Assessment Strategy does not describe these systems in detail. It only provides the overarching principles. These systems may vary from one Awarding Body to another and the CDI accepts this, providing the overarching principles of this document are consistently put into practice.

ASSESSMENT AND INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

Assessors

All assessors should be occupationally competent in the unit they are assessing. This means that each assessor must, according to current sector practice, be competent in the functions covered by the units they are assessing. They will have gained their occupational competence working within an appropriate occupational sector. They are not required to occupy a position in the organisation more senior than that of the candidate they are assessing. However, centres must be alert to the risks that all such arrangements could present and ensure that sufficient quality controls are in place through the internal verification process to minimise the possibility of collusion between candidates and assessors.

Assessors must be able to demonstrate consistent application of the skills and the current supporting knowledge and understanding in the context of a recent role directly related to the units they are assessing as a practitioner, trainer or manager.

All assessors should be familiar with the units that relate to the qualification and must be able to interpret and make judgements on current working practices within the area of work. They are required to maintain their occupational competence by either actively engaging in continuous professional development activities or by performing the operational role as part of their regular responsibilities in order to keep up to date with developments relating to the sector.

Assessors should hold or be working towards the appropriate assessor qualification specified by the Regulatory Authority (SQA Accreditation).

Expert Witnesses

Expert witnesses should also be occupationally competent in the unit(s) they are assessing. The assessor is responsible for making the final judgement in terms of the candidate meeting the evidence requirement for units.

The role of the expert witness is to submit evidence to the assessor as to the competence of the candidate in any given Unit. This evidence must directly relate to the candidate's performance in the workplace which has been seen by the expert witness.

Internal Quality Assurance

All internal verifiers should be occupationally knowledgeable across the range of units for which they are responsible. They must understand the nature and context of the assessors' work and that of their candidates. Internal verifiers are required to sample the assessment process and resolve differences and conflicts on assessment decisions.

Internal verifiers should ensure that assessment has been carried out by persons who are occupationally competent within the area they are assessing. They must maintain their occupational knowledge by actively engaging in continuous professional development activities in order to keep up-to-date with developments relating to the sector.

Internal verifiers should hold or be working towards the appropriate internal verifier qualification specified by the Regulatory Authority (SQA Accreditation).

Centres should ensure that internal verifiers have an appropriate induction to the qualifications and standards that they are internally quality assuring and have access to ongoing training and updating on current issues relevant to these qualifications. Information on the induction, occupational competence and continuing professional development of all assessors, expert witnesses and internal verifiers must be made available to the Awarding Body, generally via the external verifiers.

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

The monitoring and standardisation of assessment decisions will be achieved by robust external quality assurance processes in line with the requirements of the Regulatory Authority.

The CDI will require all external quality assurance reports relating to a Centre to be evaluated by the Awarding Body and any risks relating to quality control to be addressed.

Those persons conducting external quality assurance must be occupationally knowledgeable, have a thorough understanding of qualifications they will be quality assuring and detailed knowledge of the Awarding Bodies' system and documentation. They should have a comprehensive understanding of the guidance produced by the Awarding Bodies describing assessment and quality assurance practice.

External verifiers should hold, or be working towards, the appropriate EV qualification as specified by the Regulatory Authority and be committed to maintaining their occupational knowledge by actively engaging in continuous professional development.

ASSESSMENT

Evidence of candidates' performance will be drawn primarily from naturally occurring work activities that take place under normal working conditions in a normal work environment.

The following main assessment methods have been identified as suitable for these qualifications:

- **Direct observation** of practice in the workplace by an assessor or expert witness
- **Questioning** by an assessor
- **Professional discussion** where the candidate discusses with the assessor how their evidence meets the assessment criteria and the discussion is recorded as part of the evidence
- **Expert Witness testimonies**
- **Personal statements or candidate's reflective diary or account** on their performance, or candidate's reflection on the application of theories in practice
- **Product evidence** examined by the assessor

NB. Simulations are not generally recommended - Assessment in a simulated environment should only be used in the following circumstances:

1. Where the nature of the work activity presents high risk/danger to the candidate and others, for example, personal safety
2. Where evidence in the workplace will not be demonstrated within an acceptable time frame

The Awarding Bodies should issue adequate guidance to their centres as to how these simulations should be planned and organised. In general this guidance must ensure that the demands on the candidate during simulation are neither more nor less than they would be in a real work situation. This guidance should clearly state the strategy for simulations. Simulations must be agreed between the representative from the Awarding Body who is responsible for external quality assurance and with the person who is responsible for internal quality assurance in the assessment centre, prior to use.

ALL SIMULATIONS SHOULD FOLLOW THESE BASIC PRINCIPLES:

1. A centre's overall strategy for simulation must be examined and approved by the person from the Awarding Body who is responsible for external quality assurance.

The nature of the contingency and the physical environment for the simulation must be realistic and candidates should be given no indication as to exactly what contingencies they may come across.

3. Where simulations are used they must reflect the requirements of the qualification units.

4. The location and environment of simulation must be agreed with the person responsible for internal quality assurance, prior to taking place and be checked by the Awarding Bodies representative responsible for external quality assurance.