

**SVQ 4 Children's Care Learning and Development
at SCQF level 9**

Group Award Code: G81W 24

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY and GUIDANCE

General Introduction

This document is based on the final Assessment Strategy which was produced along with the new National Occupational Standards by National Day Nursery Association (NDNA) and supported by the Sector Skills Council – Skills for Care and Development. This guidance on the gathering of evidence and Evidence Requirements has been produced collaboratively and subscribed to by the following UK Awarding Bodies: SQA, Edexcel, CACHE, City and Guilds and supported by Skills for Care and Development.

Welcome

.....to the Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Children's Care Learning and Development level 4. This is a nationally recognised award accredited by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), and is suitable for those working as managers or lead practitioners in early education and childcare.

In the SVQ in Children's Care Learning and Development level 4, candidates are expected to hold responsibilities for the overall development, management and quality assurance of service provision including the supervision of staff and the management of resources.

To achieve the SVQ in Children's Care Learning and Development level 4, candidates must achieve **9** Units in total — **4** Mandatory Units, **5** Optional Units.

The full selection of units that make up the SVQ in Children's Care Learning and Development at level can be found in the Information Sheet.

The following pages offer assessment guidance to candidates, assessors, expert witnesses, internal verifiers and external verifiers — in short — anyone who is involved in the assessment process.

About Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)

SVQs are work-based qualifications, which set the level of competence required by childcare workers. These are called standards and they have been designed and developed by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) through consultation with employers and practitioners from across the statutory, voluntary and private sector.

SVQs are nationally recognised awards, which cover a wide range of health and social care activities. They also have levels assigned to them, which are related to the responsibilities of a person's actual job. In undertaking this Award the candidate would normally be acting in a manager or lead practitioner role in early education and childcare.

What does an SVQ look like?

All SVQs — follow the same format. There are:

- ◆ **Units**
- ◆ **Elements**
- ◆ **Performance Criteria**
- ◆ **Knowledge Specification**
- ◆ **Evidence Requirements**

UNITS are simply different tasks that are familiar areas of work to all childcare workers.

For example, the SVQ in Children's Care Learning and Development level 4, *contains* 4 Mandatory Units and Optional Units which reflect the different tasks a childcare worker might do – (**9 Units in total are required to complete the SVQ**).

Each Unit comprises several **ELEMENTS** — which describe the activities workers are expected to perform.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA (PCs) are built into each element and are **the standards** against which the work activities should be measured — and for which evidence of actual performance must be provided.

KNOWLEDGE — this requires that candidates **understand** their actions, and can integrate knowledge and practice.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS — are specific to each Unit, and detail what particular evidence is required for the Unit in order for a candidate to meet the performance criteria and knowledge. It is important that these instructions are followed. So for example, if it says “the assessor/expert witness **must** observe the candidate”, then observation **must** be done — simulation or witness testimony will not do instead.

In this award the observation of practice for the Mandatory Units must be carried out by the Assessor. The Expert Witness may supply supplementary evidence for the Mandatory Units. However the observations for the Optional Units may be carried out by the Assessor and/or Expert Witness.

Who's who in SVQs?

the candidate

is the person undertaking the SVQ. The responsibility of a candidate is to meet with the assessor, plan how to undertake units and then produce evidence to demonstrate competence.

the assessor

is the person who assesses the candidate and makes a decision if he/she is competent, based on a variety of evidence. The assessor is normally (but not always) in the same workplace as the candidate. The assessor has the responsibility to meet with the candidate regularly, to plan, support, judge and give feedback on performance.

the expert witness

is a person who is occupationally competent in the candidate's area of work and who may see the candidate working on a daily basis — more so than the assessor. They are able to make a judgement about competence, but it is still the role of the assessor to incorporate these judgements into the final (or summative) assessment decision for the whole SVQ.

the internal verifier

is someone designated by the assessment centre to ensure that assessors are performing consistently in the use of assessment methods and assessment decisions. This can be carried out by sampling evidence on a regular basis and by ensuring that candidates are being supported to achieve their award.

the external verifier

is appointed by the SQA, the Awarding Body, to ensure consistency in assessment and internal verification across all centres offering the award. Centres are normally visited by an External Verifier once a year. SQA's External Verifiers also meet with EVs from other Awarding Bodies to ensure UK wide standardisation.

Required expertise of assessors, expert witnesses and internal verifiers**Assessors**

All assessors must:-

- Have the necessary competence in the subject matter of the National Occupational Standards. They must also have the necessary competence in the assessment procedures and language(s) used for assessment. They must be occupationally experienced and competent i.e. be capable of carrying out the functions covered by the units they are assessing to the standard described within them according to current best practice. This competence should be credible and maintained through continuing professional development including professional updating where this is necessary to cover the extended children's age range. (Professional updating may take the form of in-service/in-house training, self study or professional study covering the 0-16 age range.)
- Hold, or be working towards the appropriate assessor qualification (hold D32 and 33 or hold or working towards A1) to be achieved according to the regulatory requirements.
- Have knowledge of and commitment to the principles and values of the sector and the principles and values contained within the National Occupational Standards.
- Have a thorough knowledge of the sector and its settings, including current legislative and regulatory requirements, codes of practice and guidance within the home country where assessment is taking place.

Coordinating assessors

In order that the requirements for occupational competence of assessors can be met and to allow flexibility and delivery, candidates may have more than one assessor involved in the process of assessment, with each assessing different units or elements of units. Where more than one assessor is involved, there must be a named assessor who is responsible for coordinating the assessment for an individual candidate.

Coordinating assessors will be responsible for integrating, planning and directing assessment for the whole qualification. Coordinating assessors must ensure that the best use is made of all evidence that is available to make judgements about the competence of candidates against the standards. The coordinating assessor should make the final judgement of competence for each unit that has been assessed by more than one assessor.

The coordinating assessor must be a qualified assessor, who is occupationally competent, occupationally experienced and experienced in the assessment of S/NVQs and therefore meets all the requirements noted above for assessors.

Expert Witnesses

Given the nature of the work with children and their families, which may from time to time, include sensitive situations requiring confidentiality, there may be a need to make use of **Expert Witnesses** as an important source of performance evidence in the workplace. Expert witnesses can be drawn from experienced individuals (see criteria below) who can attest to the candidate's performance in the workplace. This may include line managers or other experienced colleagues from inside an organisation or from other agencies. This may prove particularly important for those candidates who work unsupervised, but who have contact with a range of different professionals in the course of their work activities.

Evidence from expert witnesses must meet the tests of validity, reliability and authenticity. Expert witnesses will need to demonstrate: -

- a working knowledge of the relevant National Occupational Standards.
- current or recent (within the last 2 years) experience of working at or above the level for which they are attesting competence.
- demonstration of appropriate, continuous professional development relevant to the sector for which they are attesting competence.
- that they have no conflict of interest in the outcome of their evidence.

It is not necessary for expert witnesses to hold an assessor qualification, as a qualified assessor must assess the contribution of performance evidence drawn from an expert witness to overall evidence of competence.

Internal Verifiers

Internal verifiers play a key role in the quality assurance and verification of the assessment process by monitoring assessor performance and ensuring standardisation of assessors' judgements of competence. Internal verifiers must have no conflict of interest in their verification role.

Internal verifiers and trainee internal verifiers must meet regulatory requirements. They must be occupationally experienced and competent in the standards they are being asked to verify. Internal verifiers must either:-

- be experienced practitioners who have demonstrated the competences required by the standards during their professional career. They should be able to demonstrate the currency and credibility of their occupational competence through evidence of continuous professional development, including professional updating where this is necessary to cover the extended children's age range

or

- be the managers or supervisors of those who regularly perform the competences required and who are directly responsible for monitoring the work performance of such individuals.

or

- be trainers who are themselves occupationally competent and who have direct responsibility for developing the competences required in the standards.

Internal verifiers must:-

- hold (V1, D34) or be working towards the appropriate internal verifiers qualification (V1) qualification to be achieved according to regulatory requirements.
- be in a position to obtain the necessary resources to effectively coordinate the assessment process and standardise assessment decisions across a number of assessors.
- be in a position to provide authoritative advice, call meetings as appropriate, visit and observe assessment and carry out all the internal verification roles

- have knowledge of, and commitment to the principles and values of the sector
- have a thorough knowledge of the sector and its settings, legislative and regulatory requirements, codes of practice and guidance within the home country where internal verification is taking place.

Assessment Methods

There are a number of methods of assessing evidence which can be used to demonstrate a candidate's competence. These are:

- DO** **D**irect **O**bservation by the assessor or expert witness of real work activities. For this Award, the assessor must do the observation for the Mandatory Units, although the Expert Witness may provide additional evidence if required.
- RA** **R**eflective **A**ccount by the candidate, which is a detailed description of real work activities. Sometimes this reflection on practice can take the form of a Professional Discussion (which also must be recorded).
- EW** Evidence provided by an **E**xpert **W**itness — this can be either observation of practice or questioning/professional discussion on a particular area of work. The expert witness could also give a candidate feedback on a reflective account.
- P** **P**roducts – these are usually reports and recordings made by candidates as part of their normal work duties. Projects and assignments from college or in-house courses could also be considered as products, as well as Achievement of Prior Learning (APL).
- Q** **Q**uestioning/**P**rofessional **D**iscussion — can be used to cover some gaps in PCs, for clarification of observed practice or for knowledge.
- WT** **W**itness **T**estimony — this is a statement or comment by someone who was present while the candidate was carrying out an activity (eg colleagues, children, young people, families and carers) and can confirm that the candidate's evidence is authentic.

Simulation

Demonstration of competence in interactive work with children and families requires real work situations and experience has shown that the use of simulation within the sector is limited. However, it is recognised that simulation may be needed from time to time where events are infrequent or it is inappropriate to observe, although performance is critical and a high degree of confidence that the candidate would act appropriately is required, examples may be fire drills, or sensitive confidential meetings. Simulation can never be the sole source of evidence for a unit.

Details of where simulation is acceptable can be found in the Evidence Requirements of each Unit.

In addition to the evidence requirements for each Unit of the SVQ, SQA from time to time issues 'assessment guidance' where it is thought that guidance may assist the process of assessing a candidate. This information is provided on the Care Scotland web pages on the SQA website, www.sqa.org.uk.

observation	The assessor/expert witness records judgements of observed practice, showing the skills demonstrated by a candidate, and records how performance criteria and knowledge have been evident in the candidate's practice. It is not acceptable for candidates to record assessor observations: if this is done, then it has the status of a Reflective Account.
reflective account	Candidates are required to produce reflective accounts that are written in the first person and describe their actions in completing a task. The candidate is expected to indicate the PCs, and knowledge which are demonstrated in the practice. The reflective account should always explicitly focus on the candidate's real work and not on what <i>might</i> be done.
the expert witness	Is a person who is occupationally competent in the candidate's area of work and who may see the candidate working on a daily basis — more so than the main or 'co-ordinating' assessor. They are able to make a judgement about competence, but it is still the role of the assessor to incorporate these judgements into the final (or summative) assessment decision for the whole SVQ. The expert witness can observe and record practice for any of the Optional Units, question and record the candidate's answers or give feedback on a reflective account. The candidate should not record the observation done by the Expert Witness. Who can be an Expert Witness must be determined and agreed in advance with the SVQ co-ordinator in a Centre
product	Any work product that shows how a candidate meets the PCs, and knowledge can be used as evidence. PCs that indicate that the candidate should have recorded information are best met by products. Products should be the candidate's own work. It is not necessary for work products to be actually in the portfolio, as long as the assessor/IV and EV has access to them and there is an audit trail.
witness testimony	If someone other than an assessor sees the candidate carry out some work, then the assessor can request confirmation of this from a witness. Whereas a witness can make a qualitative comment on the performance of the candidate, it is the assessor who makes the judgement of the witness testimony matched against the specific PCs, and knowledge.
simulation	Simulation is used by assessors where the work task is unlikely to occur. An artificial version of the situation is created to allow the candidate to demonstrate performance and possibly knowledge in a given area by simulating the activity and judging how the candidate would deal with the task if it arose. Simulation is only permitted if the evidence requirements explicitly say so.
projects and assignments	Projects and assignments are occasionally set by assessors to allow the candidate to meet some gaps in performance and

knowledge evidence. Assignments from college courses can also be used for knowledge evidence.

accreditation of prior learning (APL) Prior achievements of the candidate can be used to evidence the PCs, and knowledge, provided there is an audit trail. However, current practice must also be included to show that the candidate still has the skill at the time of completing the qualification. Candidates using work from eg an HNC Assignment must clearly indicate on the evidence the PC's and knowledge being claimed.

knowledge specification Each Unit lists the knowledge and understanding that is required to effectively carry out the specific area of work practice. Most of the knowledge should be inherent in the candidate's work and must be explicitly evident in the records of observations, reflective accounts or by answers to questions.

Principles and Values for National Occupational Standards in Children's Care, Learning and Development

The principles and values underpin the complete set of standards in their entirety.

Principles

1. The welfare of the child is paramount
2. Practitioners contribute to children's care, learning and development and this is reflected in every aspect of practice and service provision
3. Practitioners work with parents and families who are partners in the care, learning and development of their children and are the child's first and most enduring educators

Values

1. The needs, rights and views of the child are at the centre of all practice and provision
2. Individuality, difference and diversity are valued and celebrated
3. Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice are actively promoted
4. Children's health and well-being are actively promoted
5. Children's personal and physical safety is safeguarded, whilst allowing for risk and challenge as appropriate to the capabilities of the child
6. Self-esteem, resilience and a positive self-image are recognised as essential to every child's development
7. Confidentiality and agreements about confidential information are respected as appropriate unless a child's protection and well-being are at stake
8. Professional knowledge, skills and values are shared appropriately in order to enrich the experience of children more widely
9. Best practice requires reflection and a continuous search for improvement

Further Guidance on Knowledge Evidence

Competent practice is a combination of the application of skills and knowledge informed by values and ethics. When reading the knowledge specification for a particular Unit, **it is important to read the knowledge requirements in relation to expectations and requirements of your job role.**

You need to provide evidence for **ALL** knowledge points in every Unit (**NB: assessors beware of duplication!**) and you can do this in a number of ways:

- ◆ Can be claimed in Reflective Accounts and in Direct Observations — but needs to be explicit. If not explicit enough, then additional questioning or professional discussion on the practice may be necessary — which must be recorded.
- ◆ Can be claimed on assessed work from courses (eg HNC assignments or similar) — if so, the Knowledge Evidence numbers should be marked in the relevant sections of the assignment. However, candidates would still have to demonstrate through questioning or discussion with the assessor that they are still able to put this knowledge into practice, especially if the course work was done some time ago.
- ◆ Can be claimed by evidence from in-house courses — provided it is clear how and on what the candidate was assessed. If there was no assessment, then the course content can be used along with additional questioning by the assessor to ascertain application of knowledge — or by the candidate's own comments in Reflective Accounts showing how they are using the knowledge.
- ◆ Through written and oral questions by the assessor — all of which need to be recorded (if oral, this can be written up either by the assessor or the candidate).

It is essential that knowledge evidence is primarily recorded through Reflective Accounts and Direct Observations as only using questions diminishes the importance of the integration of knowledge and practice. 'Question banks', which have their place, are NOT acceptable as the only form of knowledge evidence.

In each case, the evidence number where a particular knowledge point is to be found should be entered into the box beside that knowledge point.

Remember, the 'amount' and 'depth' of knowledge required should be consistent with the candidate's job role.

You are required to know and understand how to support child/young person's development **in the age range that you work with.** Where you work across different age ranges you will need to select the age range for which you are likely to be able to provide the most comprehensive and high quality evidence.

In addition to the above you are also required to provide evidence of your detailed knowledge and understanding of child/young person's development for each of the age ranges in Unit CCLD403 of the award (**see knowledge point 18**). In order to evidence this knowledge point it **may** be appropriate for candidates to undertake a project – an example of a project is included in the worked examples contained in this document. **Please note that this is an example and there are other equally acceptable methods to assess this knowledge point.**

How to get started

The above guidance and explanations should be sufficient to allow an assessment to commence.

The best way to fully understand an SVQ award is **simply to start!**

At the start, the assessor and candidate should meet and draw up an **ASSESSMENT PLAN**.

The first assessment plan should contain some general decisions about how often candidate and assessor will meet — and where. It may be important to agree a place where meetings will not be interrupted. Subsequent plans should be specific about what evidence is suitable for the particular Units being discussed, when this evidence will be collected and should include review dates.

It is recommended that candidates and assessors take a more ‘holistic’ view of both the job role and the assessment of competence. What this means is that you are encouraged **not** to approach the SVQ on a Unit by Unit basis, but to see how normal day to day, workplace activities will provide evidence of competence for several SVQ Units. This “holistic approach” may not happen when you start your SVQ as some people may prefer to simply focus on one Unit. However, after this you and your assessor will be more familiar with the standards and should use this more holistic approach to your work. It is encouraging to try and start with a familiar area of everyday work, and be very specific about what piece of work the assessor will observe. The candidate, with the help of the assessor, should also leave the planning meeting with a very clear idea of what has to be written for a Reflective Account. Finally, a date should be agreed when the assessment plan for the Units will be reviewed and a target date set for completion.

The exemplars ahead provide an insight into how this might be tackled including an example of an assessment plan.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Scottish Vocational Qualification in Children's Care, Learning and Development Level 4

Worked examples to follow

The following pages contain **some** worked examples of how to write evidence of performance and knowledge and how to match it against the units, elements, PCs, and knowledge of the standards. The examples do not **necessarily** show all the evidence which would be required for a complete Unit.

We hope you will find the worked examples helpful. Please note, that whilst you are requested to use the SQA recording documentation, it is recognised that candidates and assessors will have different styles describing, explaining and writing about events and incidents. You should do this in the way most suitable to you.

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