Assessor's Guidelines for the SVQ2 Steelfixing Occupations (Construction) SCQF level 5

First edition: November 2006
Second edition: December 2011
Third edition: May 2012
Publication code: DB3294/3

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Published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DQ
Lowden, 24 Wester Shawfair, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 1FD

www.sqa.org.uk

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About this guide

This guide provides some practical examples of how to assess your candidates for the **SVQ2 Steelfixing Occupations (Construction) SCQF level 5**. You may be able to think of other ways of assessing your candidates and recording your decisions about their competence.

Using assessments based on these examples does not guarantee successful verification — it is still your responsibility to ensure that internal quality assurance procedures are followed.

Introduction

This introduction provides a brief overview of SVQs and how they are assessed in the workplace. If you are already familiar with the concept of SVQs, you may wish to go to the next section.

About SVQs and the SCQF

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are work-based qualifications which set the level of occupational competence for each sector of the economy and are usually delivered in the workplace or in partnership with a college or other training provider. The qualifications have been designed by standards-setting bodies made up of experienced practitioners who represent employers, professional bodies, trade unions, education and voluntary organisations.

Each standards-setting body is responsible for developing national standards which define *what* employees (or potential employees) must be able to do, *how well*, and *in what circumstances*, to show that they are competent in their work.

Each SVQ which a standards-setting body develops has to fit into a broad framework which allows qualifications in the UK and throughout Europe to be compared.

There are SVQs for nearly all occupations in Scotland and they are available at SVQ levels 1–5. SVQs are currently notionally placed in the SCQF as the individual SVQs may be at differing SCQF levels and have differing amount of credit points, depending on the structure and context of the SVQ. SVQs are a means of recognising the skills and knowledge people need in employment, ie job competence. Successful completion of an SVQ provides clear evidence that the learner works to nationally recognised occupational standards.

Each Unit defines one aspect of a job or work-role, and says what it is to be competent in that aspect of the job. To be awarded a full SVQ, learners must achieve each of the SVQ Units which make it up by demonstrating that they are competent in that aspect of the job. The Units which make up the SVQ can also be taken as freestanding awards. Some SVQs or SVQ Units are incorporated into other awards or programmes including HNCs and Modern Apprenticeships.

Explanation of levels

SVQ1 (SCQF level 4)	Competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in the performance of a range of varied work activities, most of which may be routine or predictable.
SVQ2 (SCQF level 5)	Competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in a significant range of varied work activities, performed in a variety of contexts. At this level, there will be activities, which are complex or non-routine and there is some individual responsibility and autonomy. Collaboration with others, perhaps through membership of a work group or team, may often be a requirement.
SVQ3 (either SCQF level 6 or 7)	Competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in a broad range of varied work activities, most of which are complex and non-routine. There is considerable responsibility and autonomy, and control or guidance of others is often present.
SVQ4 (either SCQF level 8 or 9)	Competence involves the application of knowledge and skills in a broad range of complex technical or professional work activities, performed in a wide variety of contexts and with a substantial degree of personal responsibility and autonomy. Responsibility for the work of others and the allocation of resources is often present.
SVQ5 (SCQF level 11)	Competence involves the application of skills and a significant range of fundamental principles across a wide and often unpredictable variety of contexts. Very substantial personal autonomy and often significant responsibility for the work of others and for the allocation of substantial resources feature strongly, as do personal accountability.

For further information on SCQF go to **www.scqf.org.uk**.

How are standards defined in SVQs?

All SVQs consist of standards which can be broken down into various parts.

Units define the broad functions carried out in the sector, and are made up of a number of Elements. These **Elements** describe the activities which employees have to perform, and will require candidates to demonstrate certain skills or Knowledge and Understanding.

The quality of performance in what people must be able to do — how well they have to perform — is described by **Performance Criteria**. These may also be called **statements of competence** or **what candidates should do**.

The section on **Knowledge and Understanding** says what candidates must know and understand, and how this knowledge applies to their jobs.

You may also come across standards containing statements on **scope**. These statements could, for example, list the equipment that candidates are expected to be familiar with and use in their occupational area.

Increasingly, you may see changes to this format as standards become more user-friendly and are written in plain English. For example, there may be some standards containing **Range Statements** or **Evidence Requirements**, but over time these should disappear. You may, however, find that information on the context, nature and amount of evidence which is required to prove competence (which used to be given in Range Statements and Evidence Requirements) is now defined in the **assessment guidance** for the qualification. Assessment guidance is drawn up by the awarding body and is packaged along with the standards to form the SVQ.

Who is involved in SVQs?

There are several roles:

- **the candidate** — the person who wants to achieve the SVQ (eg an employee)
- **the assessor*** — the person who assesses the candidates and decides if they are competent (eg supervisor)
- **the internal verifier*** — an individual nominated by the centre (eg a company) who ensures that assessors apply the standards uniformly and consistently (eg supervisor's line manager)
- **the external verifier*** — an individual appointed by SQA who ensures that standards are being applied uniformly and consistently across all centres offering the SVQ

*Assessors and verifiers in centres will be asked by SQA to prove they have the appropriate occupational competence to assess and verify the SVQ. Occupational competence has been defined by the standards-setting body in the Assessment Strategy for this SVQ(s) — see SQA's website: **www.sqa.org.uk**.

Assessors and verifiers are also expected to obtain an appropriate qualification in assessment and verification — this can be the Learning and Development Units (the national standards for assessment and verification), or an alternative qualification which SQA also recognises.

The steps involved in assessing a candidate for an SVQ

In deciding whether a candidate should achieve an SVQ, you will go through these stages:

- planning for assessment
- generating and collecting evidence of the candidate's competence in the Units
- judging the evidence of the candidate's ability and making an assessment decision based on the evidence
- recording the assessment decision and the candidate's achievement

1 The SVQ2 Steelfixing Occupations (Construction) SCQF level 5

The SVQ2 Steelfixing Occupations (Construction) has been developed by ConstructionSkills and is intended for people in construction steelfixing.

These people may be working as steelfixers, chargehand steelfixers, or working foreman steelfixers. They will require skills and knowledge in the cutting and bending of reinforcement steel on site; prefabrication of reinforcement cages and components for site use; installation of reinforcement steel to a variety of structural components on site; and moving and handling of materials, components and equipment associated with steelfixing. In carrying out their steelfixing duties on site, they will require to comply with appropriate procedures and practices in relation to efficiency, teamwork, productivity and, of paramount importance, safety.

The SVQs are designed to be assessed in the workplace, or in conditions of the workplace. Examples of the settings or centres in which the SVQs are likely to be delivered include: construction sites, civil engineering sites, further education colleges and training centres.

Structure of the SVQs

This section lists the Units which form the SVQ in Steelfixing Occupations (Construction).

SVQ2 Steelfixing Occupations (Construction) SCQF level 5 (GF7T 22)

Mandatory Units

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
FN2J	6	12	VR 641	Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare
FW0J	5	5	VR 642	Conform to Productive Work Practices
FN2V	5	5	VR 643	Move, Handle or Store Resources

Optional Units (any two from the following Units)

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
FW1E	5	18	VR 166	Cut and Bend Reinforcement Steel to Shape
FW1G	5	24	VR 534	Fix Steel in Situ
FW1J	5	25	VR 535	Prefabricate Reinforcement Steel Sections

Free-standing Units

SQA ref	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
F00Y	5	8	VR 402	Slinging and Signalling the Movement of Loads

An Assessment Strategy for the SVQ

As part of their/its review of the SVQ(s), the standards-setting body ConstructionSkills has developed an Assessment Strategy which defines a range of requirements:

- the occupational expertise of assessors and verifiers
- a definition of simulation
- definition of the workplace
- information on a model of independent assessment or external quality control

The relevant parts of the Assessment Strategy are published on SQA's website (**www.sqa.org.uk**), and both SQA and centres must comply with these requirements.

Why would people be interested in the SVQ?

People will take SVQs for a variety of reasons: to gain promotion, to prove their job competence, or for personal development. There will be other reasons too. One of the first things to do is to find out why your candidates want to do the SVQ, and to advise them of the appropriateness of the qualification. If anyone is acting as a coach or mentor to your candidates, they might help you to do this.

How do candidates begin?

Choosing the SVQ

You should make sure that candidates get guidance before starting out on an SVQ — they need advice to ensure that their existing job remit, skills, experience, and their plans for progression, are matched to the SVQ selected. It does not have to be you as the assessor, who carried out the matching process, but whoever has responsibility for this should ensure that the assessment opportunities available to the candidate are also considered.

Example

Andy was a 44 year old steelfixer who had worked on construction sites in central Scotland since leaving school with no qualifications at the age of 15. He required a formal qualification in steelfixing to satisfy the current requirements of the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS), and with this in mind his employer arranged for an assessment provider to visit him at the site and advise on the best way forward.

With On Site Assessment and Training (OSAT) as the preferred route for delivery of the qualification, an investigation of Andy's work experience and current position revealed that the SVQ2 Steelfixing Occupations (Construction) at level 2 would be the most suitable qualification for him. They found that Andy should be able to generate good evidence to cover the mandatory Units plus two optional Units.

Andy's Training and Development Manager arranged for an assessor to visit the site to help Andy to construct a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate his competence in the chosen Units.

Detailed discussion between Andy and the assessor at the initial profiling session revealed that work available within the current project would most likely provide sufficient valid evidence for the prefabrication and installation areas in addition to the three mandatory Units. With mutual agreement an assessment plan was drawn up to cover the following Units:

- Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare
- Conform to Productive Work Practices
- Move, Handle or Store Resources
- Cut and Bend Reinforcement Steel to Shape
- Prefabricate Reinforcement Steel Sections

2 Preparing to assess the SVQ

This section offers practical advice on how to begin to go about assessing your candidates for the SVQ. This advice is offered as examples of good practice — you may develop your own approaches to assessing your candidates which also work well.

Your role and your candidate's role

Assessing the SVQ will involve several stages. Both you and the candidate should be clear on your roles in the assessment process before you begin.

Your role

- ensure candidates understand what is to be assessed and how it is to be assessed
- ensure the conditions and resources required for assessment are available
- help candidates to identify and gather evidence
- observe and record candidates carrying out the activities described in the standards — records should say what has been observed, how it was carried out, and what it demonstrates
- assess products of the candidate's own work
- question candidates and record results
- help candidates to present evidence
- authenticate the evidence candidates provide
- judge evidence and make assessment decisions
- identify gaps or shortfalls in candidates' competence
- provide feedback to candidates throughout the assessment process
- record achievement

Candidates' role

- prepare for assessment — become familiar with the standards, what is to be assessed and how it is to be assessed
- help to identify sources of evidence and how these could be assessed
- carry out activities, and/or produce products of own work, and/or answer questions
- gather and present evidence
- receive and act on feedback from the assessor

Planning

In planning for assessment, you will find it helpful to meet with your candidate and plan what is to be assessed, in what way, and when and where the assessment is to take place. This discussion can be confirmed in the form of an agreed assessment plan between you and your candidate.

You should treat assessment plans as working documents — they can be updated and changed as you review progress with your candidate.

As you are planning assessment, don't forget to make the most of opportunities to *integrate* assessment. This means planning to assess an activity which draws on the contents of different Units or Elements. It can be a practical and cost-effective way of assessing your candidate's competence.

If you are a new assessor working towards your Learning and Development Units (the national standards in assessment and verification) you will need copies of completed assessment plans as part of your evidence.

To help you plan for assessment, we have produced an assessment plan which covers Units VR 534 *Fix Steel in Situ* and VR 643 *Move, Handle or Store Resources*.

You will notice that we have included spaces to enter dates when the assessment plan has been reviewed. Any gaps identified during these reviews should be discussed with your candidates and noted for action in the assessment plan.

Assessment plan

Units	VR 534 Fix Steel in Situ VR 643 Move, Handle or Store Resources
Elements	

Activities	**Performance Criteria (PC)**	**Method of assessment/ sources of evidence**	**Date of assessment**	**Evidence already available**	**Links to other Units (PC and range)**
It is planned that Andy will be observed working directly from steel drawings and bending schedules, and fixing steel for lift pit walls in area three of the project. Woodside Crescent Nursing Home During the observation, aspects of moving and handling will also be considered with particular attention to selection, protection and man-handling of components.	VR 534 PC 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 VR 643 PC 1, 2, 3, 4	Observation Questioning (written) Product evidence Observation Questioning (written) Product evidence	15 Feb 2011	Fixing of reinforcement to bases — simple mats	VR 641 — Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare PC 1, 2, 3 VR 642 — Conform to Productive Work Practices PC 1, 2
Questioning for Knowledge and Understanding not apparent from performance to be identified from 2nd review					

Assessor's signature *Derek Traynor*

Candidate's signature *Andrew Fixer*

Date of agreement *14 Feb 2011*

1st review due *22 Feb 2011*

2nd review due *3 Mar 2011*

Date of completion

Selecting methods of assessment

The methods of assessment you use should be valid, reliable and practicable.

- By *valid* we mean that the assessment method should be appropriate to the standards.
- By *reliable* we mean that the assessment method should ensure consistent results when used with different candidates, different assessors and on different occasions.
- By *practicable* we mean that the method ensures that the assessment makes best use of available resources, equipment and time.

Before you assess a candidate, you must make sure that the methods of assessment you have chosen to use, along with any assessment materials (such as questions and sample answers) have been agreed within your centre through its system of internal quality assurance. This system is often called *internal verification* — its purpose is to help to ensure that assessment methods are valid, reliable and practicable.

There are both benefits and challenges when you are assessing SVQs in the workplace, or in conditions of the workplace. When you select methods of assessment, you should try to offer the candidate the benefits of workplace assessment and minimise any potential difficulties.

The benefits might be:

- assessment can be dealt with relatively informally which better suits the construction site environment
- assessor and candidate will have a lot in common which should help to put the candidate at ease
- candidate should feel more readily at ease on his home turf
- assessments can be programmed to suit the candidate's needs
- availability of all resources and a variety of tasks
- nervous candidates can see others being assessed first to let them become familiar with both the process and the assessor

The challenges might be:

- overcoming objections to disruption of progress and loss of productivity
- difficulty in locating candidates on large sites
- candidates moving from site to site or company to company
- clashes of interest when dealing with multiple candidates
- removing one candidate can adversely affect a squad
- over-familiarity when the assessor has been on the site for a long period
- objections from site management when the assessor has been on site for a long period

Please note that neither of these lists is intended as exhaustive, and other positive and negative factors may arise.

Example

You might agree with a candidate to visit his site when he will be involved in prefabrication of cages for substantial ground beams. This situation lends itself well to widening the scope of the planned observation to include other aspects of the qualification such as manual handling, teamwork, safety, or efficiency. On arriving at the site for the planned observation, you may find that progress has outstripped expectations due to the arrival of additional steelfixers, and only minor aspects of prefabrication remain to be done. This situation would have an obvious knock-on effect with considerable re-planning required.

Methods of assessment

Assessment may involve a range of assessment methods. For SVQs, some of the most commonly used methods are observation, product evidence, and questioning.

Observation

Observation by an assessor is considered to be the most valid and reliable method of assessment. It can be organised in a variety of ways:

- working alongside the candidate
- arranging to visit when naturally-occurring activities are carried out by the candidate
- arranging for activities to take place

Observation by the assessor can often be supplemented by other types of assessment methods such as questioning. For example, it may be appropriate to ask oral questions of candidates as they carry out naturally-occurring activities.

There are very few sections of the qualification which cannot under normal circumstances be assessed by observation, and comprehensive recording of the observations should lead to successful verification.

Product evidence

As candidates work towards achieving the SVQ, they will produce evidence in the form of products of their work. The nature of this evidence can vary widely depending on what the candidate's job entails, but examples of product evidence include:

- in-situ installations of bar, mesh and/or prefabricated reinforcement
- prefabricated components such as beams, columns, walls, etc

Questioning

Candidates have to show that they can meet the knowledge specifications for the SVQs. For these SVQs, Knowledge and Understanding is specified for each PC. Much of a candidate's knowledge and understanding will be apparent from what they do or produce as part of their work, but this will not always be the case, and questioning can be a useful way of confirming what candidates know and understand.

Questions can be asked in a variety of forms, such as oral questions, short answer written questions, and multiple-choice.

You should be careful that the method of questioning does not go beyond the competence required for the SVQ and become a barrier to fair assessment. For example, some candidates will feel more comfortable with oral questions than written.

Q I noticed when you were getting organised to tie the steel, you were continually communicating with the formworkers and general labourers — what was the reason for that?
A Communication with other workers on site is important to avoid conflicts of interest, and for safety reasons it is essential that others working nearby are kept informed of your next move.

Q When you were instructed to lay the bottom mesh in the floor slab, I noticed you spent some time studying the steel drawing before starting — what information were you looking for?
A In different areas of the job the main bars of the longitudinal mesh require to go in different directions for structural reasons, and we need to get it right

Other methods of assessment

These methods, like questioning, are often used for authentication. See Section 3 for more about authenticating candidates' evidence.

Personal statements

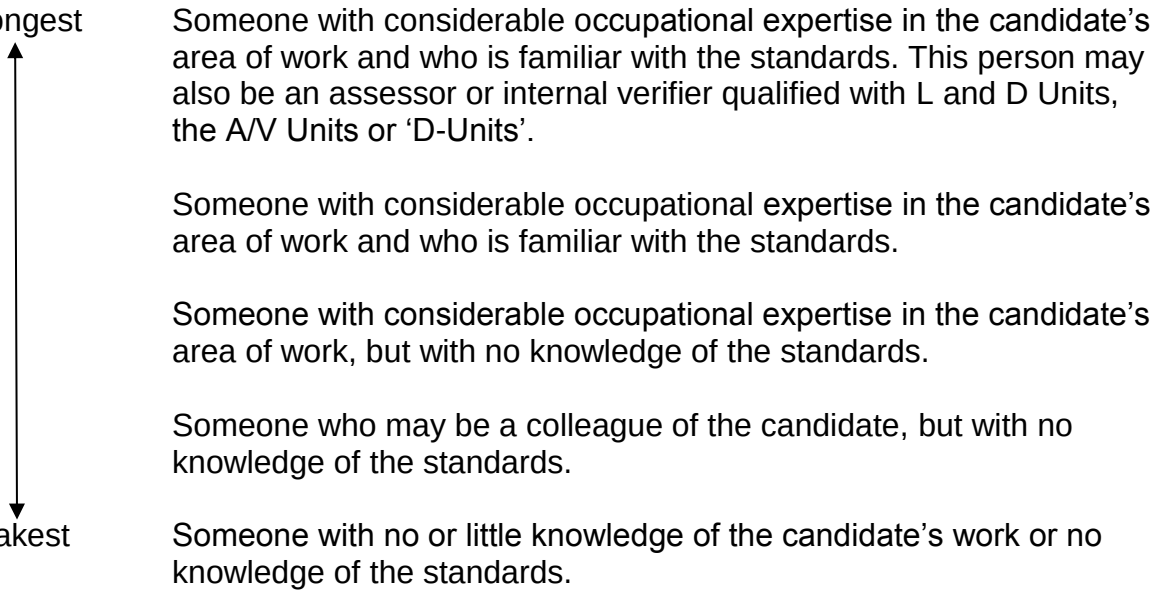
You might sometimes find it helpful to ask a candidate to give an account of why they did an activity in a certain way or how they produced a product of their work. This is often referred to as a *personal statement*. You should take care to ensure that by asking candidates to produce such statements, you are not asking them to demonstrate competence beyond what is required by the standards. You should also be selective in the use of personal statements, and make sure they have not been produced as a substitute to a more valid, reliable and practical method of assessment.

A personal statement may be used to add meat to the bones of an assessment situation. It can allow the assessor to confirm that the candidate has the required level of knowledge, awareness and understanding of the processes involved in aspects of his work, and the reasons for using those processes.

Witness testimony

For practical reasons, you may not be able to observe all the activities carried out by your candidates, but might feel that other people may be able to provide a statement on what your candidates have been doing or producing as part of their work. Statements of this kind are called *witness testimony*, and are often used to support other evidence produced by candidates. If witness testimony is used, you should, ideally, identify witnesses and opportunities for using their testimony as part of assessment planning.

You should bear in mind that the weight of the evidence will vary, depending on the knowledge and expertise of the person providing the witness testimony. You will have to take these factors into account as you make your judgement.



Witness testimony is unlikely to be sufficient in itself for a decision about the candidate's competence, and would normally be supplemented by questioning candidates.

An example

In VR 534 *Fix Steel in Situ,* it might be that due to differences in working hours, the assessor was unable to fully confirm by observation the candidate's performance in respect of storage of tools and equipment. Witness testimony could be used in conjunction with candidate questioning to fill such a relatively small gap in observed work activity.

Photographic evidence

In Construction SVQs, evidence being generated by candidates is often authenticated by the use of photographic evidence. Established best practice is for photographs to be presented in a natural sequence of events with the candidate being visible in the assessment activity. Exact site locations of the activity should be clearly noted in the photographs with dates and a clear description of what aspect of the particular Unit the photographs are linked to.

Simulation

Simulation is any structured assessment exercise involving a specific task which reproduces real-life situations.

On some occasions, it may not be practical to assess a candidate in real work. Examples might be where the standards require candidates to carry out emergency or contingency procedures, or where client confidentiality is an issue, or where a candidate's job role does not cover all aspects of the qualification.

ConstructionSkills has defined what it regards as simulation, and has specified in the standards when simulation is and is not acceptable. The standards also state when candidates must demonstrate competence in the workplace.

For more details on simulation and what constitutes performance in the workplace, look at the Assessment Strategy on SQA's website: **www.sqa.org.uk**.

In the context of the SVQ2 Steelfixing Occupations (Construction) SCQF level 5, the only areas where simulation is an acceptable option are:

- Unit VR 641 Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare
  - PC 2 Safe use of fire extinguishers, as appropriate to the fire
  - PC 4 Organisational procedures in case of accident and/or fire
- Unit VR 643 Move, Handle or Store Resources
  - PC 1 Safe use of fire extinguishers, as appropriate to the fire

Please note that if circumstances dictate that further aspects of the qualification can only be dealt with by simulation, then specific permission needs to be arranged with the awarding body.

Other sources of evidence

Other sources of evidence can be previous experience or learning, case studies or assignments.

SQA's *Guide to Assessment* (see section 5) has more advice on methods of assessment and how to ensure that your assessment is valid, reliable and practicable.

3 Generating evidence

The methods of assessment you use should generate sufficient evidence to demonstrate the candidate's competence.

We described earlier the circumstances in which you might choose to use different methods of assessment. Starting on the next page, this section gives you examples of forms which you can use to record and present evidence of:

- observation (by the assessor)
- questions and candidate responses
- personal statement (produced by the candidate)
- witness testimony

There are blank forms which you can copy and use in assessment in Appendix 1.

Observation

For observation, note that the form asks you to record the skills and activities observed. This helps you to make a judgement on how the activity was carried out and what it demonstrates.

Observation record

Unit/Element(s) VR 543 Fix Steel in Situ
VR 643 Move, Handle or Store Resources

Candidate Andrew Fixer

Evidence index number 1

Date of observation 15 Feb 2011

Skills/activities observed	Performance Criteria covered
Following initial basic instruction and the provision of drawings and bar schedules for lift pit walls in area three, Andy interpreted the information provided and correctly selected appropriate bars from site stock. He used the forklift to move the selected bundles as closely as possible to the work area, and from there worked closely with the other members of his squad to manhandle the components to the lift pit as required. He used timber bouts to keep steel bundles clear of the muddy ground. Andy wore the site specified minimum personal protective equipment of hard hat, safety boots, hi-viz vest and gloves. Later, when he had to use the Stihl saw to cut two existing starter bars to length, he supplemented this with goggles and ear defenders.	VR 534 — PC 1 VR 534 — PC 5 VR 534 — PC 3 VR 643 — PC 2 VR 534 — PC 2 VR 643 — PC 1 VR 643 — PC 4 VR 643 — PC 3 VR 534 — PC 2
After checking the dimensions of the lift pit and correctly confirming the accuracy of previously carried out work, Andy cleared away the remnants of the kicker shutters to give a tidy and clear work area and set to with systematic and organised placing and tying of the steel. As mentioned above, he had to obtain a Stihl saw to cut two overlength starter bars which he did safely and correctly. Being aware that the Stihl saw was no longer required, Andy returned it to safe storage when he went back to the site compound for his lunch break. Andy carried out the steelfixing in a safe and organised manner, and made an appropriate choice of tools and equipment (steelfixer's nips, measuring tape, chalk and Stihl saw). Andy selected and used the following materials correctly — steel, tying wire, and sufficient and suitable spacers. Andy disposed of the minimal waste — starter bar offcuts — in the site skip and cleaned up the work area on completion.	VR 534 — PC 4 VR 643 — PC 3 VR 534 — PC 2 VR 534 — PC 2 VR 534 — PC 3 VR 534 — PC 5 VR 534 — PC 4 VR 643 — PC 3
He worked well to complete the job in time for the formworkers to erect the wall shutters before the engineer's check prior to concrete arriving mid-afternoon. He then returned the drawings and schedules to his foreman to signify completion.	VR 534 — PC 6

Knowledge and Understanding apparent from this observation

Andy displayed the knowledge required to accurately interpret both drawings and specifications, relative to steelfixing, and transfer this to the practical work. He also adopted safe and healthy work practices including appropriate choice of PPE for the work being undertaken, organised work areas and the resources required to carry out given work in the required timescale, and carried out steelfixing operations safely and accurately.

Other Units/Elements to which this evidence may contribute

VR 641 Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare
VR 642 Conform to Productive Work Practices

Assessor's comments and feedback to candidate

You worked safely and competently throughout the observation and maintained a high level of accuracy in the positioning of the individual components. Minor difficulties in the initial interpretation of the steel drawing were soon overcome and this aspect will be looked at during the observation of VR 535 *Prefabricate Reinforcement Steel Sections*, and further instances of VR 534 *Fix Steel in Situ*.

You dealt well with the preparation for and storing of the requisite steel, and finished the job off well with a good tidy up — job well done Andy.

I can confirm the candidate's performance was satisfactory.

Assessor's signature Derek Traynor **Date** 15 Feb 11

Candidate's signature Andrew Fixer **Date** 15 Feb 11

Questions and candidate responses

This form can be used to record any questions you might ask the candidate to establish what they know and understand. You should note the candidate's responses on this form too.

Note that there is a space near the top of the form for you to record when, where, how and why you asked the questions.

Where you want to give the candidate written questions, this form could also be used.

Questioning to cover scope of knowledge and understanding

The level and extent of questioning required can be as varied as the candidates themselves, and the type and circumstances of work carried out, but it would be very difficult for the individual assessor to gauge the individual questioning needs of each candidate and tailor questioning to those needs.

It should be remembered when deciding on questioning requirements, that the overall aim from the assessor's point of view is to cover the entire knowledge and understanding aspect of each Unit by some means during the course of assessment. Some knowledge and understanding will be evident by virtue of observed performance, while other aspects will require confirmation by some form of questioning whether it be oral, written short answer, or multiple choice.

Current best practice is to use Unit based groups of questions designed to cover the full knowledge and understanding requirement of each Unit, and it is suggested that the preferred format would be a good mix of multiple choice and short answer questions.

No sample questions have been included in this document to allow assessors and centres to compile individual question banks free from leading influences.

Candidate’s personal statement

If a personal statement is being used as evidence, it should be completed by the candidate. The statement should record what they did, how and why they chose to carry out an activity or produce work in a certain way. Where other people may have been present during an activity and they may be able to provide witness testimony, the candidate should record how the statement links to other evidence in the column provided.

Personal statement

Date	Evidence index number	Details of statement	Links to other evidence (enter numbers)	Unit, Elements, Performance Criteria, Performance statements, scope covered
30/01/11	3	About two weeks ago, following instruction from my foreman who had left the site on company business, I was tying bars and links in the roof-edge upstands in area three. Moving round to the last section — North Elevation — it became clear that I was going to be short of some 30 number 350mm x 120mm x T10 links, and when I checked through the drawing and bar schedule it was apparent that the responsibility lay with the consulting engineers. Being aware that the upstand was to be poured next morning, and having no-one to check with, I took the decision to set to cutting and bending the 30 links using site stock steel to get the job done. Later on I left a note for my foreman so that he could check it through and then ask for a covering Engineer's Instruction. My foreman has said he will confirm this if required and can also provide a copy of the Engineer's Instruction when it comes through.	Witness testimony G Wills Foreman Steelfixer	Unit VR 642 PC 1, 2, 3 Unit VR 534 PC 1, 6

Candidate's signature Andrew Fixer **Date** 15 Feb 2011

Witness testimony

Remember when you begin to use witness testimony that it must be capable of being authenticated — even if the testimony itself is being used to authenticate a candidate's claim to competence.

To make sure the witness testimony is genuine, you must ensure that you have a record of who is acting as a witness, their relationship to the candidate (eg supervisor, client) address, telephone number and the date. There are spaces for this information in the form.

Witness testimony

SVQ title and level	SVQ2 Steelfixing Occupations (Construction)
Candidate's name	Andrew Fixer
Evidence index no	4
Index no of other evidence which this testimony relates to (if any)	3
Element(s)	VR 642, PC 1–3 VR 534, PC 1 and 6
Date of evidence	22 Feb 2011
Name of witness	Gordon Wills
Designation/relationship to candidate	Foreman

Details of testimony

I have been asked by Andrew Fixer to provide this witness testimony to confirm his own personal statement relating to a shortfall in materials which occurred on 30 January while I was off site on company business. Having worked with Andy on several sites over the past six years and holding him in high regard, I am pleased to do so.

Andy had been given the task of fixing the cages for the roof-edge upstands in area three, in preparation for the pour scheduled for next morning. On discovering a shortage of links he took the right decision and got the job done. It has to be said that this is not an unusual situation where Andy is concerned, as he has often shown this kind of initiative and can be trusted to get it right more often than not.

Attached is a copy of the relevant Engineer's Instruction.

I can confirm the candidate's performance was satisfactory.

Witness's signature *Gordon Wills* **Date** *25 Feb 2011*

Witness (please select the appropriate box)**:**

☑ Holds L and D Unit 9D/9D1, A1/A2 or D32/D33 qualifications

☐ Is familiar with the SVQ standards to which the candidate is working

Filling the gaps

There may come a time when your candidate has provided evidence for most of the Unit (or SVQ), but there are some gaps. For example, you may find that certain situations, such as handling contingencies, have not arisen during assessment. Often these will relate to dealing with health and safety issues, or unexpected problems with workflow like delays in receiving information from another part of the organisation.

In this SVQ, such gaps are likely to occur in generating evidence for such aspects as:

- VR 641 Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare
  - PC 2 Safe use of fire extinguishers, as appropriate to the fire
  - PC 3 Certain aspects of site security
  - PC 4 Organisational procedures in case of accident and/or fire

- VR 642 Conform to Productive Work Practices
  - PC 3 Documentation required by the organisation is completed

- VR 643 Move, Handle or Store Resources
  - PC 1 Safe use and storage of lifting aids and equipment
  - PC 1 Safe use of fire extinguishers as appropriate to the fire

You may be able to overcome these by simulation (which in some instances is permitted and in others would be subject to specific authority approval); by specific questioning designed to confirm requisite knowledge and understanding; by the introduction of procedures which would naturally produce the evidence required; or by the arrangement of formal, topic specific training or upskilling to bridge gaps.

Guidance and support to candidates

At all times during the assessment process — from planning through to making your assessment decision — feedback should be ongoing, clear and constructive. Feedback should be given against the national standards by relating it to the evidence provided, including the knowledge specifications.

Where there are any shortfalls in a candidate's competence, you should discuss these with your candidate and make plans for re-assessment.

Judging candidate evidence and making an assessment decision

In judging candidate evidence, you must be satisfied that your candidates can work consistently to the required standard, and that the evidence they have produced is their own. You must consider whether your candidate understands and applies the knowledge evidence and how this links to performance evidence.

Evidence must:

- be relevant to the SVQ
- be authentic
- show current competence
- be sufficient to help you form a decision about the candidate's competence

Insufficient evidence

You have to judge whether the candidate has produced enough evidence required by the standards for you to reach a decision about their evidence.

Where there is insufficient evidence, you should say this to your candidate. You should tell them that it is not that they are not yet competent — there is simply not enough evidence on which to make a decision.

In this situation, your feedback to your candidates must help them produce more evidence and/or plan for further assessment.

Authenticating candidates' evidence

Authentication is required where you have not observed candidates' performance at first hand.

You can check whether a candidate has produced evidence which they claim shows their competence by questioning them or, if this is appropriate, asking them to produce a personal statement, using witness testimony, or seeking peer reports from other colleagues of the candidate.

Example

See the personal statement example on page 23 and the related witness testimony on page 25, which were used retrospectively to bridge a potential gap with the witness testimony acting as authentication.

4 Recording achievement

You should retain all evidence — clearly referenced — for internal and external verification.

The candidate's evidence is normally kept in a file, often called a *portfolio*. These documents help you and your candidates to collect, present and cross-reference the evidence to the national standards. They are also a means of recording your assessment decisions, and they tell an External Verifier what stage a candidate has reached in achieving the SVQ.

Recording documents do not need to be paper-based — it is possible to use an electronic format for collecting and structuring the evidence. Whatever format you and your candidates choose to use, the documents must show what evidence was generated, the assessment decisions you made, how the evidence meets the standards, and where the evidence can be located. You should avoid photocopying items simply to put them in a portfolio — a clear explanation of where the evidence can be found (for example, in a filing cabinet) may be sufficient for the External Verifier to follow it up and include it in the visit.

There are various reasons why record-keeping is so important:

- it provides a way of tracking a candidate's progress in achieving an SVQ
- it helps candidates to make claims for certification of their competence
- internal verifiers and External Verifiers use the records to sample assessment decisions
- it helps us to monitor the quality assurance of our qualifications

If your candidates' evidence is incomplete, or cannot be located, or if there is inaccurate cross-referencing to the standards, there is a risk that an internal verifier or External Verifier will be unable to confirm your assessment decisions.

To help you and your candidate present evidence and record your assessment decision, we have provided examples of the forms which you and your candidate might use to compile the portfolio.

- Completing the Unit progress record
- Using the evidence index
- Completing the Element achievement record

These forms are also used in SQA's portfolio.

Completing the Unit progress record

You should complete this form each time your candidate achieves a Unit from the SVQ by adding your signature and the date next to the relevant Unit.

At this stage, candidates should make sure they have completed the recording documents correctly and that their evidence can be easily located. Only then should they circle the relevant Unit number at the top of the form. This enables both of you to see at a glance what stage the candidate is at in their SVQ.

Unit progress record

Qualification and level SVQ2 Steelfixing Occupations (Construction) SCQF level 5

Candidate Andrew Fixer

To achieve the whole qualification, you must prove competence in 3 **mandatory** Units and 2 **optional** Units.

Unit checklist

Mandatory	VR 641	VR 642	VR 643				
Optional	VR 534	VR 535	VR 166				

Mandatory Units achieved

Unit number	Title	Assessor's signature	Date
VR 641	Conform to General Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare	Derek Traynor	17 April 2011
VR 642	Conform to Productive Work Practices	Derek Traynor	17 April 2011
VR 643	Move, Handle or Store Resources	Derek Traynor	8 April 2011

Optional Units achieved

Unit number	Title	Assessor's signature	Date
VR 534	Install Reinforcement Steel	Derek Traynor	18 March 2011
VR 535	Prefabricate Reinforcement Steel	Derek Traynor	26 March 2011
VR 166	Cut and Bend Reinforcement Steel to Shape		

Using the index of evidence

The purpose of the index of evidence is to help you locate and work through the candidate's evidence. It should give you a summary of what evidence the candidate has collected, and where (eg in a portfolio) it can be found.

The index of evidence should be completed by entering:

- the index number for each piece of evidence
- a description of each piece of evidence
- the place or location where it can be found
- the initials of the internal verifier and the date (if they have sampled the candidate's evidence)

Ideally, it should be candidates themselves (with your support and encouragement) who complete the index.

You must make sure that the information in the evidence index is accurate when your candidates' portfolios are presented for assessment and verification — particularly the information about where the evidence can be located. This is important because we suggest that anything which has been produced as day-to-day work is kept in its normal location, but anything which has been produced through assessment for the SVQ, eg observation checklists, is filed in the candidate's portfolio. In this way, your candidate can avoid having to photocopy work products just for the sake of including them in a portfolio. It also means that evidence produced as a result of assessment is kept safely in a central file.

If the index of evidence is not completed with an accurate description and location of the evidence, there is a risk that an internal verifier or External Verifier might be unable to confirm your assessment decisions.

Index of evidence

SVQ title and level	SVQ2 Steelfixing Occupations (Construction) SCQF level 5

Evidence number	**Description of evidence**	**Included in portfolio (Yes/No) If no, state location**	**Sampled by the IV (initials and date)**
1	Direct observation of the candidate carrying out steelfixing operations on site and while doing so moving and handling resources(Observation by assessor)	Yes	SB 25/3/11
2	Record of written and oral question and answer session between candidate and assessor	Yes	
3	Personal statement by candidate (Andrew Fixer)	Yes	SB 25/3/11
4	Witness testimony from candidate's foreman (Gordon Wills)	Yes	SB 25/3/11

Completing the Element achievement record

To help you and your candidates cross-reference the evidence to the standards of the SVQs, we have provided records similar to those produced in the SQA portfolio. Use one record for each Element. The grids should be completed by:

- entering the evidence index number in the first column
- giving a brief description of the evidence in the second
- ticking the relevant boxes for the Performance Criteria (or statements of competence as they are sometimes known)
- entering the areas of knowledge and understanding the piece of evidence covers

If integrated assessment is used (linking PC or Elements across different Units) the evidence should be cross-referenced back to the relevant Units.

We have provided a completed example to show how to use the record.

Element achievement record

Unit VR 534 Fix Steel in Situ

Element

Evidence index no	Description of evidence	PC/performance statements						Areas of Knowledge and Understanding/scope														
		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6									
1	Observation Report on Candidate Steelfixing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓															
2	Knowledge Questions							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									

Unit VR 534 Fix Steel in Situ

Element

Notes/comments

Andy worked in a safe and professional manner throughout the observed period. He took care to organise the necessary reinforcement in line with the bar schedule provided, and after transporting it to his work area, worked accurately and quickly to tie the steel as detailed on the drawing. Andy's actions in identifying and dealing with the shortfall ensured the job was completed on programme and it has to be said that he achieved the required result without sacrificing quality or safety standards.

The candidate has satisfied the assessor and internal verifier that the performance evidence has been met.

Candidate's signature	Andrew Fixer	**Date**	18/3/2011
Assessor's signature	Derek Traynor	**Date**	18/3/2011
Internal verifier's signature	Stuart Black	**Date**	25/3/2011

5 Further information

What else should I read?

The publications listed here provide additional information on how to implement SVQs. Details of these and other SQA publications are available on our website at **www.sqa.org.uk** on the 'Publications, Sales and Downloads' section. They can be ordered from SQA's Business Development and Customer Support Team — telephone 0303 333 0330. Please note that there may be a charge for some of these publications.

Assessor/Verifier Units: assessment guidance

External Verification: A Guide for Centres

Guide to Assessment

Introduction to Assessment Arrangements for Schools and Colleges

SQA's Quality Framework: a guide for centres

Operational Help Centre

The Operational Guide for Centres has been replaced by the online Operational Help Centre on **www.sqa.org.uk**

Appendix 1: Blank recording forms

Unit progress record

Qualification and level _____

Candidate _____

To achieve the whole qualification, you must prove competence in xx **mandatory** Units and xx **optional** Units.

Unit checklist

Mandatory									
Optional									

Mandatory Units achieved

Unit number	Title	Assessor's signature	Date

Optional Units achieved

Unit number	Title	Assessor's signature	Date

Index of evidence

SVQ title and level	

Evidence number	Description of evidence	Included in portfolio (Yes/No) If no, state location	Sampled by the IV (initials and date)

Element achievement record

Unit

Element

Evidence index no	Description of evidence	PC/performance statements						Areas of Knowledge and Understanding/scope													

Unit

Element

Notes/comments

The candidate has satisfied the assessor and internal verifier that the performance evidence has been met.

Candidate's signature _____ **Date** _____

Assessor's signature _____ **Date** _____

Internal verifier's signature _____ **Date** _____

Assessment plan

Units					
Elements					
Activities	**Performance Criteria (PC)**	**Method of assessment/ Sources of evidence**	**Date of assessment**	**Evidence already available**	**Links to other Units (Performance Criteria and Range)**
Questioning for Knowledge and Understanding not apparent from performance to be identified from 2nd review					

Assessor's signature _____ **1st review due** _____

Candidate's signature _____ **2nd review due** _____

Date of agreement _____ **Date of completion** _____

Personal statement

Date	Evidence index number	Details of statement	Links to other evidence (enter numbers)	Unit, Elements, Performance Criteria, Performance statements, scope covered

Candidate's signature _____ **Date** _____

Observation record

Unit/Element(s) _____

Candidate _____

Evidence index number _____

Date of observation _____

Skills/activities observed	**Performance Criteria covered**

Knowledge and Understanding apparent from this observation

Other Units/Elements to which this evidence may contribute

Assessor's comments and feedback to candidate

I can confirm the candidate's performance was satisfactory.

Assessor's signature _____ **Date** _____

Candidate's signature _____ **Date** _____

Witness testimony

SVQ title and level	
Candidate's name	
Evidence index no	
Index no of other evidence which this testimony relates to (if any)	
Element(s)	
Date of evidence	
Name of witness	
Designation/relationship to candidate	
Details of testimony	

I can confirm the candidate's performance was satisfactory.

Witness signature _____ **Date** _____

Witness (please select the appropriate box)**:**

☐ Holds A1/A2 or D32/D33 qualifications

☐ Is familiar with the SVQ standards to which the candidate is working

Record of questions and candidate's answers

Unit	
Element(s)	
Evidence index number	
Circumstances of assessment	
List of questions and candidate's responses	
Q	
A	
Q	
A	
Q	
A	
Q	
A	
Q	
A	
Q	
A	

Assessor's signature _____ **Date** _____

Candidate's signature _____ **Date** _____