



Assessor's guidelines for the SVQ for IT Users (ITQ) at SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6

Publication date: August 2011
Publication code: DB5171/2

Published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DQ, and
Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 1LE

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About this guide

This guide provides some practical examples of how to assess your candidates for the SVQs for IT Users (ITQ) at SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6. 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

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are work-based qualifications which set the level of occupational competence for each sector of the economy. 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. SVQs are specified at five levels which reflect the various technical and supervisory skills knowledge and experience, which employees should have as they progress in their industry.

Explanation of levels

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| SCQF level 1 | Defines competent performance in a range of activities which are largely routine and predictable. |
| SCQF level 2 | Specifies that competent performance must be shown in a broader range of work activities which are less routine and predictable. The employee will have more autonomy and responsibility, and may have to work as part of a team. |
| SCQF level 3 | Specifies that competent performance must involve the employee in carrying out a broad range of varied work activities, most of which are complex and non-routine. There is considerable autonomy and responsibility, including the possibility of controlling or guiding others. |
| SCQF level 4 | Specifies competence as complex technical or professional work activities which require a substantial degree of personal autonomy or responsibility. Managing staff and other resources is often involved. |
| SCQF level 5 | Specifies competent performance as involving the employee in carrying out a significant range of activities in a wide variety of situations which are often unpredictable. Substantial responsibility and autonomy is involved in the work, which requires decision-making in the allocation of resources and the work of others. This will require complex skills such as analysis, design and evaluation. |

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 each **Outcome** within the Unit. Some Units have **only one** Outcome. The **skills and techniques** column lists practical tasks/activities, in which the candidate must demonstrate competence, ie these are what **candidates should be able to do**.

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

Evidence Requirements provide generic statements of how assessment(s) should be structured and indicate the type of physical evidence that should be generated by the candidate and retained by assessors. Typical examples of evidence items are provided in the **Support Notes** section under **Guidance on Examples of Evidence**.

The **Support Notes (Summary)** section also provides suggested context(s) for delivery, plus an expanded list of content items which are to be covered. These content items are extensive, but not exhaustive.

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

Assessors will be appointed by approved centres to assess candidate performance and judge the validity of the assessment IT activities undertaken for a specific and real purpose.

Where expert witnesses make a significant contribution to the assessment process:

- ◆ the assessor will be responsible for approving the selection of expert witnesses including evidence of occupational competence and monitoring their contribution to the assessment process
- ◆ a register of all accepted expert witnesses must be maintained by the centre

The assessor will be responsible for making assessment judgements including for units where evidence relies extensively on witness testimony. The assessor will make use of appropriate witness testimony as part of the overall assessment of the candidate. In addition the assessor must ensure that witness testimony clearly matches the level and breadth of performance described in the National Occupational Standards (NOS), and this may be done, for example, by the assessor questioning the witness against the knowledge and skills specified in the NOS.

In addition to the requirements of the regulatory authorities, assessors must:

- ◆ have carried out continued professional development to familiarise themselves with current standards for assessment
- ◆ have the IT experience and occupational competence to enable them to make a valid judgement about the demonstration of competence in the area they will be assessing

Internal verifiers

Internal verifiers will be appointed by approved centres to ensure the quality and consistency of assessments within the centre. In addition to the requirements of the regulatory authorities, Internal Verifiers must have the necessary skills and experience to assess the Units and qualifications they are verifying.

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 these SVQs — see SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk. Centres are advised to visit the e-skills Assessment Strategy document, with particular reference to Section 2 .

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

External Verifiers

External verifiers will be appointed by SQA to monitor and assure quality and consistency of assessments within and between centres.

External Quality Arrangements

Centres are advised to refer to the e-skills Assessment Strategy document, and also External Verification: a guide for centres (SQA, October 2009, FA5241).

The steps involved in assessing a candidate for an SVQ

In deciding whether a candidate should get 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 SVQs IT Users (ITQ)

The SVQ IT Users (ITQ) have been developed by e-skills uk and are intended for people in any occupational area requiring the regular use of Information Technology (IT) as part of their jobs.

These people may be working as IT system users, using IT to find and exchange information or using IT productivity tools and application software.

They will require skills and knowledge in:

- ◆ improving productivity using IT
- ◆ setting up, securing and maintaining IT systems
- ◆ communications
- ◆ the use and management of operating systems and application software
- ◆ the use and management of e-mails and the internet

The SVQs are designed to be assessed in the workplace, or in conditions of the workplace. In order to reflect the standards of competence expected by employers, all evidence for the mandatory Unit must be naturally-occurring from IT activities undertaken for a specific and real purpose. This does not necessarily mean that candidates must be in paid employment. However, the setting in which they are assessed should be a realistic working environment. The specification of a realistic work environment can be found in the document *SVQ for IT Users (ITQ), Assessment Strategy (Scotland)* (e-skills uk, March 2009), page 10, Annex A, section A 1.1. Guidance for the assessment of optional Units can be found in section A 2 of the same document.

Structure of the SVQs

The following table summarises the award conditions for the full SVQ for IT Users (ITQ). As at 05/02/2010

SCQF level	4	5	6
ITQ/SVQ level	1	2	3
Minimum credit points	15	28	40
Mandatory Units	Improving Productivity Using IT (3 credit points)	Improving Productivity Using IT (4 credit points)	Improving Productivity Using IT (5 credit points)
Optional Units	12 credit points or more Minimum 6 credit points from IT units at L1(SCQF level 4) or above	24 credit points or more Minimum 12 credit points from IT units at L2 (SCQF level 5) or above	35 credit points or more Minimum 18 credit points from IT units at L3 (SCQF level 6)
Sector Specific units ⁵ [SSU]	Maximum 3 credit points SSU at any relevant level	Maximum 4 credit points SSU at any relevant level	Maximum 5 credit points SSU at any relevant level

Key requirements

The **minimum total** number of credit points at each level are:

- ◆ 15 credit points for ITQ level 1
- ◆ 28 credit points for ITQ level 2
- ◆ 40 credit points for ITQ level 3

There is one mandatory Unit at each level — Improving Productivity Using IT. The mandatory Unit must be taken at the level of the qualification. Candidates may select optional Units of which at least half of the credit points must be from IT Units at or above the level of the ITQ.

⁵ Unit or Units from other credit-rated qualifications (eg Maths, English, Customer Care, Administration).

Sector-specific requirements

A QCF or SCQF accredited Unit from another sector *may* be included within the optional credit point total (sector specific Unit or SSU), with the following constraints:

- ◆ the SSU may only contribute a limited number of credit points (eg for SVQ level 1 no more than 3 credits; for SVQ level 2 the maximum is 4 credits; and SVQ level 3 the maximum is 5 credits)
- ◆ the SSU may be at any level

This section lists the Units which form the SVQ IT Users (ITQ) at SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6.

SVQ IT Users (ITQ) at SCQF level 4 (ITQ level 1)

Mandatory Unit at SCQF level 4

SQA ref	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
F99D	3	IPT	Improving Productivity Using IT 1

Optional Units at SCQF level 4

SQA ref	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
F99G	3	IUF: FS	IT User Fundamentals 1
F99J	3	SIS	Setting Up an IT System 1
F99M	2	OSP	Optimise IT System Performance 1
F99R	1	ITS	IT Security for Users 1
F99W	2	ICF:FS	IT Communication Fundamentals 1
F99Y	3	INT	Using the Internet 1
F9A3	2	EML	Using Email 1
F9A6	3	UCT	Using Collaborative Technologies 1
F9A9	2	UMD	Using Mobile IT Devices 1
F9AC	2	PIM	Personal Information Management Software 1
F9AE	3	ISF: FS	IT Software Fundamentals 1
F9AG	2	AV	Audio Software 1
F9AK	2	AV	Video Software 1
F9AN	2	BS	Bespoke Software 1
F9AT	2	BS	Specialist Software 1
F9AX	2	CAS	Computerised Accounting Software 1
F9C1	2	DMS	Data Management Software 1
F9C4	3	DB	Database Software 1
F9C7	3	DIS	Design Software 1
F9CA	3	DIS	Imaging Software 1
F9CE	3	DTP	Desktop Publishing Software 1
F9CH	2	DPS	Drawing and Planning Software 1
F9CM	3	MM	Multimedia Software 1
F9CR	3	PS	Presentation Software 1
F9CW	3	PM	Project Management Software 1
F9D0	3	SS	Spreadsheet Software 1
F9D3	3	WS	Website Software 1
F9D6	3	WP	Word Processing Software 1

SVQ IT Users (ITQ) at SCQF level 5 (ITQ level 2)

Mandatory Unit at SCQF level 5

SQA ref	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
F99E	4	IPU	Improving Productivity Using IT 2

Optional Units at SCQF level 5

SQA ref	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
F99H	3	IUF:FS	IT User Fundamentals 2
F99K	4	SIS	Setting Up an IT System 2
F99N	4	OSP	Optimise IT System Performance 2
F99T	2	ITS	IT Security for Users 2
F99X	2	ICF:FS	IT Communication Fundamentals 2
F9A0	4	INT	Using the Internet 2
F9A4	3	EML	Using Email 2
F9A7	4	UCT	Using Collaborative Technologies 2
F9AA	2	UMD	Using Mobile IT Devices 2
F9AD	2	PIM	Personal Information Management Software 2
F9AF	3	ISF:FS	IT Software Fundamentals 2
F9AH	3	AV	Audio Software 2
F9AL	3	AV	Video Software 2
F9AP	3	BS	Bespoke Software 2
F9AV	3	BS	Specialist Software 2
F9AY	3	CAS	Computerised Accounting Software 2
F9C2	3	DMS	Data Management Software 2
F9C5	4	DB	Database Software 2
F9C8	4	DIS	Design Software 2
F9CC	4	DIS	Imaging Software 2
F9CF	4	DTP	Desktop Publishing Software 2
F9CJ	3	DPS	Drawing and Planning Software 2
F9CN	4	MM	Multimedia Software 2
F9CT	4	PS	Presentation Software 2
F9CX	4	PM	Project Management Software 2
F9D1	4	SS	Spreadsheet Software 2
F9D4	4	WS	Website Software 2
F9D7	4	WP	Word Processing Software 2

SVQ IT Users (ITQ) at SCQF level 6 (ITQ level 3)

Mandatory Unit at SCQF level 6

SQA ref	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
F99F	5	IPU	Improving Productivity Using IT 3

Optional Units at SCQF level 6

SQA ref	SCQF credit points	SSC ref	Title
F99L	5	SIS	Setting Up an IT System 3
F99P	5	OSP	Optimise IT System Performance 3
F99V	3	ITS	IT Security for Users 3
F9A2	5	INT	Using the Internet 3
F9A5	3	EML	Using Email 3
F9A8	6	UCT	Using Collaborative Technologies 3
F9AJ	4	AV	Audio Software 3
F9AM	4	AV	Video Software 3
F9AR	4	BS	Bespoke Software 3
F9AW	4	BS	Specialist Software 3
F9C0	5	CAS	Computerised Accounting Software 3
F9C3	4	DMS	Data Management Software 3
F9C6	6	DB	Database Software 3
F9C9	5	DIS	Design Software 3
F9CD	5	DIS	Imaging Software 3
F9CG	5	DTP	Desktop Publishing Software 3
F9CL	4	DPS	Drawing and Planning Software 3
F9CP	6	MM	Multimedia Software 3
F9CV	6	PS	Presentation Software 3
F9CY	5	PM	Project Management Software 3
F9D2	6	SS	Spreadsheet Software 3
F9D5	5	WS	Website Software 3
F9D8	6	WP	Word Processing Software 3
FR11	4	DPE	Developing Personal and Team Effectiveness Using IT 3
FR10	8	UPT	Understanding the Potential of IT 3
FR0Y	4	DPE	Developing Personal and Team Effectiveness Using IT 2
FR12	8	UPT	Understanding the Potential of IT 2

An assessment strategy for the SVQ

As part of the review of the SVQs, e-skills uk, the standards-setting body, 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.

An example

Bill Martin is a member of the IT team within a courier delivery company. He left school with minimal qualifications and joined the army for a period of five years. He received training there in the set up and use of IT systems, and this gained expertise and interest which allowed him to secure his present job.

He felt that the time was now right for him to achieve a qualification which would give him national recognition of the skills he already had. Due to the experiences and skills acquired while in the army, plus those developed in his job, the Training and Development Manager (TDM) of the courier company has suggested that Bill consider an SVQ for IT Users (ITQ) at SCQF level 6. The TDM did a matching exercise between Bill's job remit and existing skills and experience with the requirements of the SVQ, and it emerged that Bill should be able to generate sufficient evidence to meet the requirements of the following SCQF level 6 Units:

	Credits
◆ (SIS) Setting Up an IT System 3	5
◆ (ITS) IT Security for Users 3	3
◆ (DMS) Data Management Software 3	4
◆ (SS) Spreadsheet Software 3	6
◆ (WP) Word Processing Software 3	6

The TDM arranged for an assessor within the company to provide Bill with guidance on how to collect evidence and on how to construct a portfolio, to achieve the above units. Bill also had some experience in the areas covered by two other Units; however some planning was required in order to provide him with the opportunity to demonstrate competence in these areas. The three Units are:

	Credits
◆ (IPT) Improving Productivity Using IT 3 (mandatory)	5
◆ (DB) Database Software 3	6

The requirements of the SVQ for IT Users (ITQ) at SCQF level 6 are such that every candidate is required to include the (IPT) Improving Productivity Using IT Unit, which is mandatory and worth five credits. The total of credits identified by the Units identified above comes to 35. The balance of the 40 credits required for the SCQF level 6 SVQ, would therefore have to be agreed by the TDM and Bill, and would be chosen from the list of optional Units available. In Bill's case, the requirements of the company suggested that he take the following Units:

	Credits
◆ (BS) Specialist Software 3	4
◆ (CAS) Computerised Accounting Software 3	5
◆ (PM) Project Management Software 3	5

These three Units were agreed and it was arranged that Bill should attend his local college, and shadow a senior member of staff within the company, to observe and gain practice in the areas covered by these Units, from a company perspective.

The total number of credits from the identified list of Units, including the mandatory Unit (IPT), in this case comes to 49, illustrating that the required 40 credit total may be exceeded. The extra nine credits shown here were at the request of his manager.

All these arrangements were agreed by everyone involved and were then written up in an assessment plan for Bill.

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 that 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 A/V 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:

- 1 Improving Productivity Using IT 1 — SCQF level 4 (mandatory at ALL levels)
- 2 Setting Up an IT System 2 — SCQF level 5
- 3 Spreadsheet Software 3 — SCQF level 6

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 — Example 1

Units: Improving Productivity Using IT — SCQF level 4					
Elements: Outcomes 1, 2 and 3					
Activities	Knowledge and Skills	Method of assessment/Sources of evidence	Date of assessment	Evidence already available	Links to other Units
O1: Plan the use of appropriate IT systems and software to meet requirements.	Plan a suitable IT installation given a practical scenario and select software to suit the intended purpose(s).	Scenario-based case study report justifying choices of hardware and software satisfying scenario requirements, taking into account the user perspective.	01/10/10		Setting Up an IT System
O2: Use IT systems and software efficiently to complete planned tasks.	Implement a solution to given problem, maximising the use of software facilities to complete a given task.	Practical task based on a specific user requirement.	15/10/10	Spreadsheet print — data and formula	Bespoke Software and/or Specialist Software
O3: Review the selection and use of IT tools to make sure that tasks are successful.	Objective assessment of performance of tasks completed for Outcomes 1 and 2.	Personal statement/report reviewing and justifying the choices made and methods and facilities used and adopted.	15/11/10		
Questioning for knowledge and understanding not apparent from performance to be identified from 2nd review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ planning stages ◆ procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ justification of methods and procedures used ◆ written questions ◆ candidate reports 			

Assessor's signature: *Amna Ishaq*

Candidate's signature: *Bill Martin*

Date of agreement: 30/09/10

1st review due:

2nd review due:

Date of completion:

Assessment plan — Example 2

Units: Set Up an IT System — SCQF level 5					
Elements: Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4					
Activities	Knowledge and Skills	Method of assessment/Sources of evidence	Date of assessment	Evidence already available	Links to other Units
Set up a complete personal computer system (desktop, laptop or notebook) plus peripherals (printer, scanner, webcam), communication device(s), associated software, and check that all are functioning as per expected parameters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ select components ◆ connect components ◆ connect to communication service ◆ install user defined/required software ◆ make appropriate backups ◆ perform tests using appropriate test strategy ◆ report and attend to any resulting faults 	Practical exercise, specified by scenario using assessor checklist for signoff.	24/11/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ installation reports — hardware and software ◆ fault logs ◆ test prints of software 	Optimise IT System Performance
Questioning for knowledge and understanding not apparent from performance to be identified from 2nd review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ installation strategy employed ◆ safety aspects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ written questions ◆ candidate reports 			

Assessor's signature: *Amna Ishaq*

Candidate's signature: *Bill Martin*

Date of agreement: Date of completion:

1st review due:

2nd review due:

Assessment plan — Example 3

Units: Spreadsheet Software — SCQF level 6					
Elements: Outcomes 1, 2 and 3					
Activities	Knowledge and Skills	Method of assessment/ Sources of evidence	Date of assessment	Evidence already available	Links to other Units
Given a specific data set and user requirements, construct a spreadsheet to display data, provide analysis of data entered according to predetermined user criteria, formatting sheet(s) appropriately and making fullest use of available spreadsheet facilities to graph/chart data subsets, check all entered data and correct any deficiencies in the resulting product.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how to enter and amend data ◆ import data from other associated or related spreadsheets ◆ make appropriate use of functions and formulae ◆ format sheet to user requirements ◆ chart and graph as per requirements ◆ print and publish results in appropriate and user acceptable format ◆ check that results are fit for purpose ◆ analyse problems encountered in task 	Single integrative spreadsheet exercise satisfying a provided set of user requirements.	25/11/10	Prints of (formative) spreadsheet activity	Specialist Software
Questioning for knowledge and understanding not apparent from performance to be identified from 2nd review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ design methodology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ written questions ◆ candidate reports 			

Assessor's signature: *Amna Ishaq*

Candidate's signature: *Bill Martin*

Date of agreement: Date of completion:

1st review due:

2nd review due:

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 in 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 is taken in familiar surroundings
- ◆ assessments can be taken when candidate feels ready
- ◆ the pace of learning can be determined by the candidate
- ◆ the relationship between assessor and candidate
- ◆ shift work patterns can be accommodated

The challenges might be:

- ◆ pressure of work at busy times
- ◆ confidentiality
- ◆ meeting customer needs

Example

You might agree with a candidate working in an IT department, who has to demonstrate how to extract sufficient information from clients relating to their user requirements. This might be carried out by observation as and when such situations arise. If you are an assessor who is working alongside the candidate you should be well placed to observe the candidate's performance, perhaps using a prepared checklist, and to question the candidate about the situation afterwards.

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.

Observation would be the most practical way of assessing practically-oriented tasks such as setting up a new computer system with its peripherals, installing new operating system or application software and the candidate's adherence to health and safety procedures.

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:

- ◆ a suitably formatted word processed document to organisational standards
- ◆ a database report based on a query
- ◆ web pages within a website
- ◆ screenshots

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 Outcome. Much of a candidate's knowledge and understanding will be apparent from what they do or produce as part of their work. 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 thus become a barrier to fair assessment. For example, some candidates will feel more comfortable with oral questions than written.

Q Why did you choose to use a stacked bar chart for the spreadsheet data provided?

A The data has several categories for each time period and a stacked bar chart allows a visual comparison between time periods to be made easily.

Q Why are you using an earthed wrist band while working inside this computer?

A To minimise the risk due to potential electrostatic shock or discharge.

Other methods of assessment

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

Personal statements

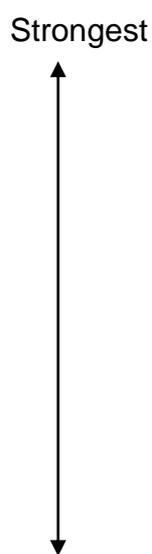
You might sometimes find it helpful to ask a candidate to give an account of why they did an activity in a certain way or how they produced a product of their work. This is often referred to as a *personal statement*. You should take care to ensure that by asking candidates to produce such statements, 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 might be used by a candidate to state and justify the approach they took in designing a set of web pages, with particular reference to how they took account of the intended audience.

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.

 <p>Strongest</p>	Someone with considerable occupational expertise in the candidate's area of work and who is familiar with the standards. This person may also be an assessor or internal verifier qualified with the A/V Units or 'D-Units'.
	Someone with considerable occupational expertise in the candidate's area of work and who is familiar with the standards.
	Someone with considerable occupational expertise in the candidate's area of work, but with no knowledge of the standards.
	Someone who may be a colleague of the candidate, but with no knowledge of the standards.
	Someone with no or little knowledge of the candidate's work or no knowledge of the standards.
<p>Weakest</p>	

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.

Witness testimony might be used to back up how a candidate successfully performed a trouble shooting fault correction procedure.

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.

e-skills uk has defined what it regards as simulation, and has specified in the standards when simulation is 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.

Simulations would be permitted for optional Units as long as they were realistic, but **not acceptable** for assessment in the mandatory Unit at all three levels of this award.

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): Data Management Software — SCQF level 6 — Outcome 2
Candidate: Bill Martin **Date of observation:** 27/11/10
Evidence index number: 14

Skills/activities observed:	Outcomes covered:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Creation and use of queries to search for and retrieve information from the system.2 Creation, definition and setting up of reports to output information to meet requirements.3 Use of the file handling techniques of the software to import and export data.4 Use of available techniques to combine and link data. <p>Note: details of the observations made will depend on the particular system used</p>	Outcome 2 — all

Knowledge and understanding apparent from this observation:

Determine and explain what queries and reports need to be run to output the required information

Other Units/Elements to which this evidence may contribute:

Database Software — Outcome 2

Assessor's comments and feedback to candidate:

You showed considerable confidence in your construction and running of the queries and reports requested of you — well done.

I can confirm the candidate's performance was satisfactory.

Assessor's signature: *Amna Ishaq*

Date: 27/11/10

Candidate's signature: *Bill Martin*

Date: 27/11/10

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.

Record of questions and candidate's answers

Unit: IT Security for Users	Element(s): Outcome 1
Evidence index number: 9	
Circumstances of assessment: To demonstrate the necessary knowledge and understanding to explain to a client the need for robust and consistent security procedures and how to follow these.	
List of questions and candidate's responses: Q: Please list three potential threats to system performance. A: These might include unwanted e-mails (spam), viruses and hackers. Q: Please list four security precautions you would implement to any IT system. A: I would have anti-virus software installed and configured, a firewall adjusted to user requirements and activity, suitable internet security settings/checks and regular backup of data. Q: What would you describe as the main threats to information security? A: I think that theft, unauthorised access and accidental file deletion are the main threats to information security. Q: How is it possible to minimise risk factors in an IT system? A: I would use passwords, anti-virus software and firewalls to combat risks.	
Assessor's signature: <i>Amna Ishaq</i>	Date: 24/11/10
Candidate's signature: <i>Bill Martin</i>	Date: 24/11/10

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, PCs, Performance statements, scope covered
12/12/10	11	<p>Staff in the tracking department use both word processing and spreadsheet software. The tasks they perform are repetitive and are considered by them to be too lengthy.</p> <p>I was asked to investigate whether it might be possible to speed up the tasks to allow them to process more orders.</p> <p>After analysing what the tasks involved were, it was possible to develop both file templates and use macros within the application software to speed up the stated tasks.</p> <p>Due to Data Protection legislation it is not possible for me to include prints of what I completed in my portfolio. As both my assessor and internal verifier are employees, they will be able to assess and verify this work.</p>		<p>IPT and SS IPT Outcome 1 — KU 2, 3, 4 and 8 SS Outcomes 1, 2 and 3</p>

Signed (candidate): *Bill Martin*

Date: 12/12/10

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:	IT Users (ITQ) — SCQF level 6
Candidate's name:	Bill Martin
Evidence index no:	12
Index no of other evidence which this testimony relates to (if any):	11
Element(s):	Units IPT and SS
Date of evidence:	12/12/10
Name of witness:	John Watt
Designation/relationship to candidate:	Line Manager
Details of testimony:	
<p>Staff in the Tracking Section had been complaining for some time about the repetitive nature and slowness of some of the tasks they were expected to complete using the company network and software.</p> <p>I asked Bill Martin to investigate these complaints and come up with a solution.</p> <p>Bill very competently interviewed the staff members concerned and was able to identify where their problems lay. He proposed that most of the delays being experienced might be rectified by the appropriate construction of templates within the application software used (WP and spreadsheet), and the use of macros would automate most of the repetitive tasks.</p> <p>I asked Bill to develop the templates and macros, observed his development work and have witnessed the templates and macros in use. His work is very competent and staff are much happier with his modifications and improvements.</p>	
<p>I can confirm the candidate's evidence is authentic and accurate. Signed by witness: <i>John Watt</i> Date: 12/12/10</p>	

Witness (please tick the appropriate box):

- Holds A1 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.

If such gaps occur in generating evidence for any Unit then these gaps may be overcome by appropriate use of questioning or secondment to another part of the organisation, where and if this is practical.

The use of simulation might also be considered in areas where commercial confidentiality, data protection or health and safety issues would make a naturally-occurring assessment or observation impractical or impossible.

However assessors should note that simulations are **not** permitted to be used in any assessment contributing towards the mandatory Unit **(IPT) Improving Productivity Using IT**.

Guidance and support to candidates

At all times during the assessment process — from planning through to making your assessment decision — feedback should be on-going, 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

With the IT User SVQs, assessors would be able to check the authenticity of candidate's work by gaining access to the candidates work area on a stand-alone PC or by accessing their network account.

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: SVQ IT Users (ITQ) at SCQF level 6

Candidate: Bill Martin

To achieve the whole qualification, you must prove competence in **one mandatory** Unit, worth 5 credits and sufficient **optional** Units to accumulate a **minimum of 35** other credits.

Unit Checklist

Mandatory		IPT										
Optional		SIS	ITS	DMS	SS	WP	BS	DB	CAS	PM		

Mandatory Units achieved

Unit Number	Title	Assessor's Signature	Date
IPT	Improving Productivity Using IT 3	<i>Amna Ishaq</i>	21/12/10

Optional Units achieved

SIS	Setting Up an IT System 3	<i>Amna Ishaq</i>	15/01/11
ITS	IT Security for Users 3		
DMS	Data Management Software 3		
SS	Spreadsheet Software 3		
WP	Word Processing Software 3	<i>Amna Ishaq</i>	18/01/11
BS	Specialist Software 3		
DB	Database Software 3	<i>Amna Ishaq</i>	25/01/11
CAS	Computer Accounting Software 3		
PM	Project Management Software 3		

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 decisions.

Index of evidence

SVQ title and level: IT Users (ITQ) at SCQF level 6
--

Evidence number	Description of evidence	Included in portfolio (Yes/No) If no, state location	Sampled by the IV (initials and date)
1	Job Description (Bill Martin)	Yes	TJ 20/12/10
2	Curriculum Vitae (Bill Martin)	Yes	TJ 20/12/10
3	Company Organisation Chart	Yes	TJ 20/12/10
4	Company Health and Safety Policy Document and Procedures	No — Main Office and Reception	
5	Checklist — installation of two new network stations in Reception	Yes	TJ 20/12/10
6	Observation Record (Data Management Software)	Yes	
7	Responses to questions relating to system performance	Yes	
8	Personal Statement	Yes	TJ 20/12/10
9	Witness Statement	Yes	TJ 20/12/10
10			
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 PCs 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: Improving Productivity Using IT

Element: Outcomes 1, 2 and 3

Evidence Index No	Description of Evidence	Skills and Techniques						Areas of knowledge and understanding/scope																	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10						
11	Personal Statement		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓					✓										
12	Witness Statement		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓					✓										
20	Answers to questions relating to data protection and other legal issues												✓	✓											
25	Hardware Evaluation Report — Director’s Suite			✓	✓	✓									✓	✓									
26	Development Report						✓	✓	✓											✓	✓				

Unit: Improving Productivity Using IT

Element:

Notes/Comments

PROGRESS REPORT

Evidence collection for this Unit is progressing very well. The quality of work demonstrated here is of a high standard — keep it up!

The candidate has satisfied the Assessor and Internal Verifier that the performance evidence has been met.

Candidate: *Bill Martin*

Date: 30/11/10

Assessor: *Amna Ishaq*

Date: 30/11/10

Internal Verifier: *Terry Johnston*

Date: 30/11/10

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

Quality Assurance Principles, Elements and Criteria

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:

Element:

Notes/Comments

The candidate has satisfied the Assessor and Internal Verifier that the performance evidence has been met.

Candidate:

Date:

Assessor:

Date:

Internal Verifier:

Date:

Personal statement

Date	Evidence index number	Details of statement	Links to other evidence (enter numbers)	Unit, Elements, Outcomes covered

Signed by candidate:

Date:

Observation record

Unit/Element(s):

Candidate:

Date of
observation:

Evidence index number:

Skills/activities observed:	Outcomes 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 evidence is authentic and accurate.	
Signed by witness:	Date:

Witness (please tick the appropriate box):

- Holds A1/A2 Units or D32/D33 Award
- 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:	
Assessor's signature:	Date:
Candidate's signature:	Date: