

Playwork Level 2 NVQ/SVQ

Agreed Common Evidence Requirements and Assessment Guidance

To be read in conjunction with Awarding Bodies regulations and guidelines
Final: December 2007

Introduction

In December 2007, UKCG approved new national occupational standards, S/NVQ structures and an Assessment Strategy Annex for Playwork Level 2. Awarding bodies will shortly be developing and submitting proposals to the regulatory bodies for new NVQs and SVQs based on these new standards.

SkillsActive, the Sector Skills Council with responsibility for Playwork, is anxious to ensure that the Assessment Guidance and Evidence Requirements for these new NVQs and SVQs is, as uniform as possible. Therefore it has co-ordinated work across the awarding bodies, with appropriate inputs from Playwork experts and experienced assessors and verifiers, to provide Assessment Guidance and Evidence Requirements for the awarding bodies to implement during the delivery of the new NVQs and SVQs.

This document must be used with close reference to the overall SkillsActive Assessment Strategy and Playwork Annex for this NVQ/SVQ.

Holistic assessment

Whilst the S/NVQ is broken down into separate units, the work of the playworker is not. This means that, as the playworker does their job, they will generate evidence across a number of S/NVQ units. Using this evidence for all the units it relates to is part of Holistic Assessment.

Many of these units cover interrelated responsibilities, and much of the naturally occurring evidence for these is likely to come from observing the candidate going about their normal day-to-day activities in a play setting.

For this reason, we strongly recommend that, if the candidate is attempting the whole NVQ or SVQ, interrelated units are assessed in a holistic manner. In other words, when assessor observations occur, the assessor is strongly advised **not** to carry out observations on separate occasions for each of these units, but to visit the play setting, observe the candidate in all the work they do with children and young people, and identify how the evidence the candidate generates matches the requirements of any or all of these units.

Separate assessments for each of these units should only be necessary if the candidate is not attempting the whole of the NVQ or SVQ, but is seeking single unit accreditation only. If more than one unit is being attempted, opportunities should also be sought for a 'holistic' approach.

It is worth noting that if the S/NVQ process is to be delivered successfully, the qualification must only be awarded to a playworker who shows that their work is competent – in other words, the playworker shows they meet all the requirements in the relevant National Occupational Standards **consistently and over a period of time**. If a pre-assessment investigation of the candidate indicates that they may not yet be competent, the playwork candidate should undertake appropriate training and/or gain more experience before embarking on their S/NVQ assessment.

Since the S/NVQ process is about the candidate (playworker) demonstrating their competence, the primary source of evidence must be observation of the candidate at work, and/or the assessor looking at other forms of evidence that the candidate's real work meets the standard. This should be supplemented by other methods, such as questioning, examining products of work, reflective accounts or professional discussions.

How much evidence is necessary?

The Playwork S/NVQ is not intended to be a snapshot of the candidate's work, but rather a qualification that shows the playworker meets the standards consistently.

The units that make up the NOS, therefore, require primary evidence to be gathered by means of fully recorded observations carried out by an AI qualified assessor who is also occupationally expert as defined by the Assessment Strategy and the Playwork Annex.

It is recommended that sufficient hours of observation should take place with the recognition that some candidates will need more time than others. Each observation session must be followed by feedback and discussion. Evidence for each performance criterion, range item and knowledge statement must be 'cross referenced', 'mapped' or 'logged' **on one occasion only**.

Observational evidence should be supplemented by additional performance evidence, such as witness testimony, reflective accounts and extra professional discussion, only on occasions when the assessor has not been present or because the evidence is not generated on a frequent basis.

Assessment occasions should not take place on the same day. The assessor must satisfy themselves that the candidate is practising competently not only during observations but also at other times as well.

In the case of a very few performance criteria or range items, assessors and verifiers should be aware that opportunities for the candidate to generate appropriate evidence may be rare, and therefore it will be acceptable to use 'historical evidence' – i.e. evidence produced before the candidate has registered for the S/NVQ. However, this evidence should not be more than two years old and should be validated as being authentic.

Simulation

With the exception of Element 2 in PW35 (see below), simulation should not feature in assessing the Playwork Level 2 S/NVQ.

Collecting Evidence

When collecting evidence, assessors need to ensure that:

- Evidence comes from work situations where the candidate is carrying out their everyday practice.
- These situations should be as natural as possible and not staged for the purposes of assessment
- Observation focuses on the candidate's natural working practices and is, therefore, likely to cover a number of performance criteria across a number of units at the same time.

It is expected that each performance criterion and range item will be evidenced through observation by a qualified assessor at least once. However, there may be some performance criteria and range items that are not possible to see through direct observation. On these occasions assessor observation must be supplemented by additional performance evidence such as witness testimony, products of work, reflective accounts or professional discussion.

Once a candidate has demonstrated that they are competent for specific performance criteria/range items that evidence can be cross referenced to the occupational standards according to the awarding bodies/assessment centres processes.

Observations

The main evidence for the Playwork Level 2 S/NVQ must be collected and evaluated by an AI qualified and occupationally expert assessor who observes and records the candidate's regular work practice.

The recording [written or aural] should be a narrative of what the assessor has seen, without value comments or judgements. [The methodology of where and how this is recorded is not prescribed and can be at the discretion of the assessment centre and their awarding body].

Within each observation the candidate will be seen to be meeting requirements across a number of units.

- An observation should include all that the assessor sees, whether this demonstrates competence or not.
- An observation is a narrative of the candidate at work. All that the candidate does should be recorded.
- An observation should be followed by a process in which the assessor and candidate have a dialogue about what has happened so the assessor is able to 'gain a window' on what the candidate has been thinking whilst their work has been taking place.
- All observational evidence that relates to a candidate's attitude, values and adherence to the Playwork Principles needs to be supported by professional discussion, questioning, reflective accounts or post-observation feedback

In some exceptional cases, it may not be possible to observe a candidate demonstrating their competence for a particular performance criterion or range item because:

- an appropriate situation never happens when the assessor is present, even though the assessor has observed on more than one occasion
- it is not everyday practice and so cannot be expected to be seen even after several visits
- it is not the sort of performance that the assessor would see because it happens outside of normal face-to-face work with children and young people, for example team meetings, supervision sessions or trips outside of the play setting.

In these cases (which must be the exception, rather than the rule), evidence may be gained by other means, for example from witness testimony, products of work or reflective accounts).

Knowledge and understanding

All knowledge and understanding should be rooted in practice; i.e. a candidate should give examples from their day-to-day work to show their knowledge and understanding in practice and the principles that underpin this. There must be evidence that the candidate possesses all of the knowledge and understanding shown in the section headed 'What you must know and understand'. In most cases this will be done through professional discussion, questioning, reflective accounts or post-observation feedback. Other techniques, such as projects and assignments might also be appropriate so long as they are still rooted in the candidate's practice.

Range ('what you must cover')

All items within each range section (where range is present) must be covered. If, after extensive observation, performance evidence for a range item has not been generated, the assessor, together with the candidate, will explore other methods of generating evidence that shows how the candidate could or would be able to meet the performance criteria for that range item, if they were working in that situation.

Please note:

PW35

Element 2: The candidate must show they can meet all of the performance criteria in the context of evacuation, either from real work practice or simulation

PW36

Element 1: It is unlikely that the assessor will be able to see the performance evidence in a direct observation. It may be more appropriate to use work products and witness testimony and reflective accounts.

Validity and Consistency of Observations

Assessors must ensure validity and consistency of a candidate's competence. Assessors will achieve this through the feedback/discussion session which follows observation and is an integral part of the assessment process.

- All observations must be followed by a feedback/discussion session, ideally taking place within 5 working days of the observation
- As part of the feedback/discussion session, the assessor and candidates must discuss what has been observed
- The discussion will be reflective in nature, the candidates will discuss what they've been doing during the observation and why. Where relevant this will be the basis for a reflective account
- The assessor will record, on the centre's feedback documentation, that the discussion has taken place, and how it ensures validity and consistency

In observing the candidate, the assessor will be present on more than one occasion. Performance evidence for the whole S/NVQ will be generated over a series of assessment visits where detailed observations of the candidate's practice will be recorded.

Observational evidence will be supported and supplemented by additional performance evidence such as witness testimony, reflective accounts and professional discussion.

The assessor has the responsibility to make a judgement about whether the candidate demonstrates consistency of practice over time. This is more than the candidate demonstrating elements of their competence on all the occasions when the assessor is present but is also about the assessor making the judgement that competent practice takes place when the assessor is not present.

Recording of competence

The process of documenting evidence requires that the evidence is 'cross referenced', 'logged' or 'mapped' to the performance criteria, range items and knowledge statements.

Each performance criterion, range item and knowledge statement needs to be 'cross referenced' or 'logged' or 'mapped' to a minimum of one piece of evidence.

The Internal Verifier may wish to question the assessor's judgment on consistency over time to ensure the rigour of the process.

In summary:

We are aiming to maintain the rigour of the assessment process by insisting on sufficient number of observations [and supporting evidence] but are reducing the amount of 'administrative' work involved in the process by asking for only one piece of evidence to be mapped.

Evidence Gathering Methods

- Observation by a qualified and occupationally expert assessor (as defined in the Assessment Strategy).
- Expert witness statements: statements by a line manager or already qualified playworker.
- Other forms of witness testimony e.g. from a colleague, parent/carer or a child. They must be a credible witness (who can be checked out if needed)
- Reflective account by the candidate that details what the candidate said, did and why
- Work products showing work undertaken by the candidate
- Professional discussion where the candidate describes what they said, did and why