



**The Sector Skills Council
for Property Services, Housing, Cleaning Services
and Facilities Management**

the sector skills council for the places where we live and work

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Final version approved September 2008

POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES FOR AWARDING N/SVQS IN HOUSING

Version 5

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1 INTRODUCTION

All SSCs have the responsibility for developing an Assessment Strategy for the N/SVQs that they develop within their sectors. The housing industry SSC (ASSET SKILLS), has worked with the industry representatives, Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and Awarding Bodies (City & Guilds and the Scottish Qualifications Authority) to develop this Assessment Strategy for the housing N/SVQs.

ASSET SKILLS, with the support of industry, is dedicated to embedding the National Occupational Standards and the N/SVQs into the workplace and to upholding the quality and integrity of the standards and the awards.

ASSET SKILLS is keen that all candidates have a good knowledge and understanding of housing initiatives and relevant legislation, particularly housing legislation.

2 ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

2.1 *The following principles will apply to Awarding Bodies:*

2.1.1 Assessment should normally be at the candidate's workplace, the preferred method of assessment will be by direct observation of the candidate by a qualified assessor.

2.1.2 A holistic approach towards the collection of evidence should be encouraged, assessing activities generated by the whole work experience rather than focusing on specific tasks.

e.g. If the candidate communicates with a customer whilst organising repairs to the customer's property these can be assessed against both the repairs and customer service elements.

2.1.3 Assessors can only assess in their acknowledged area of occupational competence.

2.1.4 Health and safety of customers/clients and employees must be maintained throughout the assessment process and if any person carrying out assessment or verification activities does not feel that there is due regard to health and safety then that person should refuse to continue with the activity(ies) until satisfied that due regard to health and safety is being taken.

3 SIMULATION

3.1 *Simulation*

The overarching principle to be applied when considering the use of simulation is that it should only be used in exceptional circumstances when one or more of the following conditions apply

- health and safety considerations
- emergency or crisis management
- activities that would cause serious inconvenience or loss to an employer if there was an undue delay in their being carried out
- infrequently occurring activities
- equality of access
- issues of confidentiality
- dealing with distressed people and difficult situations

3.2 Where simulation is used simulated working environment conditions should replicate the working environment as closely as possible.

3.3 Centres must ensure that demands on the candidate during simulation are neither more nor less than they would encounter in a real work situation. In particular:

- all simulations must be planned, developed and documented by the centre in a way that ensures the simulation accurately reflects what the standard seeks to assess
- all simulations should follow these documented plans
- A centres overall strategy for simulation must be examined and approved by the external verifier
- There should be a range of simulations to cover the same aspect of the standard so that the risk of candidates successfully colluding is reduced
- The physical environment for the simulation must be as realistic as possible and draw on real resources that would be used in the industry
- The nature of the contingency must be realistic.

4 EXPERT WITNESS TESTIMONY

It is recognised that the nature of the housing sector requires that use is made of witness testimony. Witness testimony should cover the standard and breadth of performance described in the unit. Witnesses should be occupationally competent and able to give informed testimony i.e. the candidate's line manager or appropriate colleagues.

5 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

- 5.1 Evidence from past achievement may be included as permissible evidence within N/SVQ assessment methods.
- 5.2 Evidence of knowledge and understanding can be offered as supplementary evidence as long as it is a measurable assessed outcome of learning which links to aspects of knowledge and understanding detailed in the National Occupational Standards and confirms current competence.
- 5.3 Assessors should make best use of all the assessment methods available to them in ensuring the most reliable and effective use is made of claims of prior learning and experience which relate to the individual circumstances.
- 5.4 All candidates must demonstrate current competence with respect to accreditation of prior learning (APL).

6 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF ASSESSMENT

6.1 Awarding bodies will operate a Risk Rating System of Approved Centres. This will be applied UK wide. Awarding bodies will provide details of their plans and criteria for risk rating at the time of qualifications' submissions.

6.1.1 The Awarding Bodies will carry out risk assessment annually and risk rate each Approved Centre and will take appropriate action to ensure quality assurance is maintained

7 FRAMEWORK CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL VERIFIERS

7.1 ASSET SKILLS aims to ensure that the technical and quality aspirations of industry are met, in order to inspire confidence in the national occupational standards and qualifications. ASSET SKILLS will work with the Awarding Bodies to implement a practical and cost effective external verification process that will strengthen the rigour and consistency of assessment.

7.2 The criteria will apply to existing and new External Verifiers.

7.3 Verification Competence

7.3.1 *Awarding Bodies will ensure that External Verifiers:*

Hold an appropriate external verifier qualification (D35 or V2), or be working towards the V2 qualification, and demonstrate evidence of knowledge, understanding and experience of the assessment process (together with the occupational competence requirements below).

- in England, Wales and Northern Ireland new External Verifiers must achieve unit V2 within 12 months of beginning external verification.
- in Scotland, all new External Verifiers should have an assessment plan for achieving the V2 and be working towards achieving the award. There is no timescale attached to the achievement of V2.

7.4 Occupational Competence

All External Verifiers must:

7.4.1 provide evidence of knowledge, understanding and application of the National Occupational Standards and Assessment Strategy, together with technical definitions where appropriate. Awarding Bodies should cover this requirement as part of their normal appointment process.

7.4.2 have verifiable relevant experience and current knowledge of the occupational working area at or above the level being verified. This experience and knowledge must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when verifying judgements about assessors' assessment processes and decisions. External verifiers' experience and knowledge could be verified by:

- curriculum vitae and references
- possession of a relevant NVQ/SVQ
- corporate membership of a relevant professional institution

7.4.3 have expertise so they have up to date knowledge and experience of the particular aspects of work they are verifying. This could be verified by records of continuing professional development achievements

7.4.4 have a sound in-depth knowledge of, and uphold the integrity of the national occupational standards and this Assessment Strategy (this document)

- 7.4.5 have completed continuous professional development to ensure that they are working to the current National Occupational Standards in assessment and verification.
 - 7.4.6 be aware of national issues affecting vocational education, training and qualifications in the sector.
 - 7.4.7 have appropriate knowledge of the ASSET SKILLS framework of qualifications in relevant areas to the qualifications being externally verified.
 - 7.4.8 demonstrate their ability to maintain credibility and retain the confidence of the industry through commitment to continuous personal and professional development.
 - 7.4.9 provide evidence of knowledge, understanding and application of the Regulatory Authorities' codes of practice
- 7.5 Awarding Bodies may have generic criteria and personnel specifications in addition to the above.

8.0 FRAMEWORK CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL VERIFIERS

- 8.1 Internal Verifiers are appointed by an Approved Centre and approved by the Awarding Body through their External Verifier. This criteria will apply to existing and new Internal Verifiers.
- 8.2 Internal Verifiers should be seen as the person responsible for an approved centre's assessment quality in order to facilitate the assessment process

8.3 Verification Competence

Internal Verifiers will:

- 8.3.1 Hold an appropriate internal verifier qualification (D34 or V1), or be working towards a V1 qualification.
- In England, Wales and Northern Ireland all new internal verifiers should achieve unit V1 within 18 months of beginning internal verification duties. Internal verification decisions by verifiers who are still working towards certification must be countersigned by a Verifier who has gained certification.
 - In Scotland, all new Verifiers should have an assessment plan for achieving the V1 and be working towards achieving the award. External Verifiers will monitor progress and achievement towards the achievement of V1 during centre visits
 - All new Internal Verifiers must hold units A1 and/or A2
- 8.3.2 It is desirable that all Internal Verifiers hold a relevant housing qualification.

8.4 Occupational Competence

Internal Verifiers will:

- 8.4.1 have verifiable relevant experience and current knowledge of the occupational working area at or above the level being verified. This experience and knowledge must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when verifying judgements about assessors' assessment processes and decisions. Internal verifiers' experience and knowledge could be verified by:
- curriculum vitae and references
 - possession of a relevant NVQ/SVQ
 - corporate membership of a relevant professional institution
- 8.4.1 have expertise so they have up to date knowledge and experience of the particular aspects of work they are verifying. This could be verified by records of continuing professional development achievements.
- 8.4.2 have a sound in-depth knowledge of, and uphold the integrity of the NOS and this Assessment Strategy (this document).
- 8.4.3 be prepared to participate in training activities for their continued professional development.

- 8.4.4 demonstrate their ability to maintain occupational competence by continuous professional development
 - 8.4.5 have completed continuous professional development to ensure that they are working to the current National Occupational Standards in assessment and verification.
 - 8.4.6 have knowledge of the requirements and application of the ASSET SKILLS housing assessment strategy
 - 8.3.7 provide evidence of knowledge, understanding and application of the Regulatory Authorities' codes of practice
- 8.5 Centres will be responsible for ensuring that internal verifiers plan and maintain continuous professional development
- 8.6 Approved Centres may have generic criteria and personnel specifications in addition to the above.

9 FRAMEWORK CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF ASSESSORS

- 9.1 This section is intended to assist Approved Centres in the recruitment of those individuals who will act as Assessors within the Approved Centre.
- 9.2 Assessors are appointed by an Approved Centre and approved by the Awarding Body through their External Verifier.
- 9.2.1 They should only assess in their area of technical and occupational competence as approved by their Awarding Bodies.

9.3 Assessment Competence

The Assessor should have the following :

- 9.3.1 Hold D32 and/or D33 or A1 and or A2 or be working towards A1 and/or A2 Assessor Awards.
- In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, new Assessors must achieve unit A1 or A2 within 18 months of beginning assessment duties. Assessment decisions by Assessors who are still working towards certification must be countersigned by an Assessor who has gained certification.
 - In Scotland, all new Assessors should have an assessment plan for achieving A1 or A2 and be working towards achieving the award. External Verifiers will monitor progress and achievement towards the achievement of A1 or A2 during centre visits.

Candidates in possession of a TQFE without having an appropriate A1 or A2 award should undertake continuing professional development to demonstrate that they are working to the appropriate A1 standard.

9.4 Occupational Competence

All assessors must

- 9.4.1 have verifiable relevant industry experience and knowledge of the occupational working area at or above the level being assessed. This experience and knowledge must be of sufficient depth to be effective and reliable when judging candidates' competence. Assessors must have knowledge of all key housing legislation for the area(s) they will be assessing. Assessors' experience and knowledge could be verified by:
- curriculum vitae and references
 - possession of a relevant NVQ/SVQ
 - corporate membership of a relevant professional institution
- 9.4.2 have sufficient occupational expertise so they have up to date knowledge and experience of the particular aspects of work they are assessing. This could be verified by records of continuing professional development achievements
- 9.4.3 have a sound in-depth knowledge of, and uphold the integrity of the sector's national occupational standards and this Assessment Strategy (this document)

- 9.4.4 be prepared to participate in training activities for their continued professional development
- 9.4.5 Centres will be responsible for ensuring that assessors plan and maintain continuous professional development
- 9.4.6 Approved Centres may have generic criteria and personnel specifications in addition to the above.
- 9.4.7 All assessors must receive an appropriate induction to the Housing N/SVQs and national occupational standards that they are assessing and have access to ongoing training and updating on current issues relevant to these N/SVQs and standards, preferably annually. The external verifier must be informed of the induction and continuing professional development of assessors.
- 9.5 ASSET SKILLS recommends that the following principles are included in any induction or subsequent training offered by centres (see also section 3: External Quality Control):
- Understanding of the appropriate Housing National Occupational Standards
 - The need for standardisation of assessment using housing related units
 - The suggested N/SVQ structure
 - Examples of types of evidence, and evidence gathering opportunities, for portfolio building
 - Housing specific – eg. Current/recent legislation; changes/developments in working practices
- 9.6 The requirements for occupational competence may mean that in certain cases some candidates have more than one assessor, each assessing different units. ASSET SKILLS would approve and encourage such an approach as helping to assure the quality of assessment (through ensuring that assessors have the occupational competence appropriate to the unit). In this situation, one assessor must have overall responsibility for each candidate's assessment.