



Optional assessment guidance 2023–24

This guidance is **optional**. You can use this guidance or deliver and assess as outlined in the group award specification.

Group award titles and codes:	HNC Childhood Practice GK9T 15 HNC Social Services GK89 15
--------------------------------------	---

The approach you take **must** meet the:

- ◆ full evidence requirements for graded units
- ◆ national standards

Changes to conditions of assessment and/or evidence requirements

Route 1

Candidates who are supported by their employer should continue to use their employment as their placement for the duration of the award.

Route 2

Candidates taking their award independently but currently working in a suitable social service setting can seek permission to use their workplace as a placement opportunity. This needs agreement between the centre and the organisation to ensure it is suitable, and is at the discretion of the organisation.

Route 3

Candidates with no sector employment must have a suitable placement identified at the earliest opportunity and meet the competence requirements of the three SVQ units to achieve the full HNC award.

If a candidate's placement is cut short by a few days, and if the assessor judges them competent, employers can provide an expert witness testimony to say they agree. In such cases, the reduced number of days spent on placement is acceptable, however, we still expect a minimum of 40 days. Centres should inform the external verifier of any candidates affected in this way, as this may influence their candidate sample.

Additional guidance and information

SVQ component

The SSSC, in partnership with SQA, has an [Assessment Strategy](#) for centres. This includes information on observed practice, expert witness testimony, digital, video and audio recording.

Candidates completing a shortened 'block' placement can obtain an expert witness testimony from their supervisor to complement assessors observed practice. **Note:** an expert witness can only confirm what happened, not if a candidate is competent, so the assessor still needs to make a judgement based on all the available information.

You can also use an expert witness testimony from 'observed training' for some mandatory units in First Aid, Manual Handling, and Infection Control.

You can find more information on [HNVQ delivery and assessment approaches for session 2023-24](#) on SQA's website.